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# Winter Sport Nationalism: The Canadian Olympic Press from Calgary 1988 to Vancouver 2010

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Graduate Program in Kinesiology

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Canadian government has played an increasingly significant role in influencing the direction of sport in Canada. The current Canadian high performance sport system, *Own the Podium (OTP)*, was preceded by various attempts at establishing a competitive Canadian Olympic Team. Oftentimes, the justification for the significant distribution of money in high performance sport funding was that international victories would promote nation building and nationalism. As a result of the high priority placed on international sporting victories across the globe, Canada currently has a merit-based Olympic funding program, that exemplifies the encouraged competitiveness and win at all costs attitude existent in the high performance sport system. This dissertation examines how interpretations of nationalism represented through the media have developed throughout the past 20 years, from Calgary 1988 to Vancouver 2010. Further, the dissertation examines how the investments made in high performance sport by the Canadian government, particularly its most recent *Own the Podium* program contributed to a version of Canadian winter sport nationalism that helped to legitimize public spending on high performance sport.

Keywords: Canada, nationalism, sport, Olympics, policy

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## **CHAPTER ONE – Introduction**

The current sport system in Canada is the result of more than a century long government interest in developing and improving high-performance sport and international sporting performances, oftentimes for the promotion of nationalism and, a more harmonized society. There are various forms of nationalism historically evident across the world; in particular, this dissertation will examine modern nationalism as it is specific to Canada. Researchers claim that, though ethnic groups comprise nations, nationalism is created by the forces of modernization.<sup>1</sup> Modern nationalism, then, defines the emergence of separate nations as recent historical ideologies that privilege the power of nationalism and its ability to exert control over the population.<sup>2</sup> Nationalism therefore, is promoted by the social and political elites of the time, particularly if they rely on the participation of the people through such cultural forms as sport. In short, nationalism can be a convenient tool for generating mass support and is therefore a politically-induced cultural phenomena. Nationalism is historically congruent with dominant political ideologies as it mobilizes social communities around new politico-social realities.<sup>3</sup> In Canada specifically, this nationalism has emerged particularly strongly through the Winter Olympics. From 1988 to 2010, narratives in newspapers surrounding the Olympic Games contributed to an identity for Canadians that was strongly linked to success in winter sports. This thesis examines the effects that shifts in sport and policy in Canada have had on sport narratives of Canadian nationalism from 1988 to 2010. Furthermore, this thesis demonstrates that the twenty-two year period examined experienced a development of a form of Canadian



nationalism unapologetically saturated with messages of encouraged competitiveness and confidence.

### **Nations and Nationalism**

Modern nationalists endorse the axiom that nations and nationalism are intrinsic to processes such as capitalism, industrialization, urbanization, and secularism, underpinning the emergence of the modern bureaucratic state, clearly evident in western nations such as Canada. As capitalism became the dominant mode of economic organization in powerful nations, other countries experienced its socially and economically invasive effects.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, older forms of organically-based cultural nationalism, such as those experienced in an ethnically synchronized nation (i.e. where members of the nation share the same ethnic background), became displaced or altered by the forces of modern capitalism.

Nationalism has been employed for many purposes among nation states in the modern era. Modern nationalists specifically see national unity as a resource employed by groups of individuals for the pursuit of common interests.<sup>5</sup> For example, nationalism can be deployed in the defence of power disparities, or when communities and authority structures are being disrupted, in order for governments to regain control, and the support of the population.

Modern nationalism is a specific form of civic nationalism, meaning that individuals in nations where modern nationalism exists have made a conscious decision to pledge themselves to the nation, even though the ethnic culture may not be theirs.<sup>6</sup> It is a solidarity formed around the symbols that have emerged to be of importance to the

nation. In the context of civic nationalism, there is a shared sense of national identity, community, and culture, and those that choose to adopt this identity are considered part of the nation. In these cases, it has been the role of the state to homogenise these individuals and, thus, form them into a single, unified entity, a process referred to as identity hegemony.<sup>7</sup> Due to the various ethnicities that combine to create the Canadian nation, modern nationalism is the most accurate description of the nationalism existent in Canada, as not all members come from the same ethnic background. This means that the state coordinates identities by serving as a unique focal point, but it reinforces natural psychological tendencies, such as the need for acceptance and belonging, by rewarding supporters, suppressing proponents of alternative nation-state projects, and propagating official projects through public ceremonies and public education. This means that, ultimately, governments act at the behest of elites invoking nationalism to impose cultural forms on societies that are already organized by shared culture. Nationalism is an amalgam of political ideas and processes positioned within a power matrix. The public face of this matrix is government. Invocations of collective character or identity serve to mobilize the citizenry to influence or effect cultural change.

Ozkirimli summarizes John Breuilly's argument that individuals justify their desire for state power and legitimize their political movements through nationalism.<sup>8</sup> For Breuilly, a nationalist political movement will be successful if the following criteria are fulfilled: 1. A nation with a unique character (ethnicity), 2. The interests and values of this nation must take top priority, and 3. The nation is as politically independent as possible.<sup>9</sup>

### **Mobilizing Forms of Culture: Sport**

International sport events often provide an ideal venue for displays of nationalism as athletes perform under a symbol of Canadian nationalism, the Canadian flag. Therefore, these events provide an opportunity for members of the nation to be brought together by a common reference point. This dissertation examines the ways in which the Canadian government has used sport, and the subsequent nationalist sentiments that accompany sport and particularly sporting victories to legitimize itself.

Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Canadian government has played an increasingly significant role in influencing the direction of sport in Canada and, eventually, establishing a formal sport system. Unsurprisingly, the current high-performance Olympic sport system in Canada, *Own the Podium (OTP)*, was an improvement to the former sport systems preceded by various attempts at developing the Canadian Olympic Team into a top competitor on the international stage. The initial stages of high levels of financial support for high performance athletes came through Game Plan '76 leading to the multi-million dollar programs of financial support provided by the federal government today.

Recent Canadian history has seen a high priority placed on international sporting victories. As a result, what is currently in place in Canada is a merit-based Olympic funding program, heavily directed towards supporting athletes with the potential to win Olympic medals and, therefore, diverting attention from grassroots sport, sport for development, and sport for all. Oftentimes, and with the threat of globalization to unique national identities blurring the lines between individual nations, the justification for the

uneven distribution of money placed towards funding high-performance sport is that international victories will promote nation building and nationalism.

Particularly in regards to international sporting events, there has always been a strong link between nationalism and sport. Internationally, current trends in high performance sport, such as significantly increased funding and hosting international sport events, have been rationalized through nationalism. Sport itself became a political tool to guide national competitiveness and survival of individuality through a unique identity (often intended to be associated with sport victories) in a changing world. The capacity for sporting victories to contribute to national unity has been promoted consistently in recent Canadian history and it is clear that the phenomenon of nationalism accompanies international sporting events.

### **Purpose**

This study provides an historical review of the development of the Canadian sport system from the 1988 Calgary Olympics through to *OTP*, to understand the ways in which the government shaped its direction through the management of nationalism. The study examines reflections of Canadian nationalism through this time period, particularly the emphasis on high-performance sport, through the lens of select Canadian media. Primarily, the study examines how the federal government effectively used the media to manage the phenomenon of nationalism to legitimize increased priorities on athletic performance over emphasis on the more developmental or cultural aspects of sport, buttressed by significant increases in public and private funding.

Specifically, this dissertation examines how nationalism experienced through sport developed in Canada from the Winter Olympic Games in Calgary in 1988 to the Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver in 2010. The study is bookended by these Games as the issue of nationalism assumes a heightened sense of importance for host countries. For this reason, there is an element of importance particularly at these Games placed on Canadian advantages, performances, and victory on home soil, that contribute to media reports on nationalism through the dissertation. Further, the dissertation examines, through the lens of the national media, the overtly neo-liberalist manifestation of high performance sport in Canada through the Canadian federal government's *Own the Podium* program, which established the most fundamentally 'capitalist-based sport model' in the country's history.

### **Review of Literature**

The current role of sport in Canada, developed alongside more international movements, perhaps the most important of which was the establishment of the modern Olympics Games which transformed from early limited international gatherings into the politicized event that it is today. As the Olympic Games became increasingly more commercialized and corporatized, so too did the attention paid toward the creation of the Games as a grand spectacle, where billions of dollars are spent on sport and non-sport infrastructure. From sponsorships, to funding programs, to television and advertising rights, expenditures directed toward the staging of the Olympic Games have reached unprecedented heights.

Consequently, the Olympics have offered an opportune venue for the expression and demonstration of nationalist and anti-nationalist sentiments, particularly since the Cold War Era following the Second World War. Subsequent to World War II, the increasing commercialization of sport drew attention to the politicization of sport, particularly the ability of sport to promote national unity and sentiment. Frequently, national sporting occasions create an imagined community of individuals within the nation in support of a common reference point, typically, the national team of athletes.<sup>10</sup> National sporting occasions afford members of a nation an emotionally-charged opportunity to embrace and express a common identity.

The connection between nationalism and sport has been a topic of interest, particularly in the modern era, as both have become ways of identifying oneself with the nation and the popularity of sport has paralleled the growth of nationalism. Over time, sport has become increasingly more institutionalized, bringing with it formal structures designed to shape not only participation in sport, but the role that sport plays in the life of the individual.

When Prime Minister Diefenbaker was elected into office in 1957, he saw the potential for sport to promote national unity and in the role of the government to provide social support. Upon his election, Diefenbaker appointed J.W. Willard as the Minister of Welfare who, along with Waldo Monteith as Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare, created a policy on sport and fitness for Canadians.<sup>11</sup> Before this time, sport was strongly considered school and community-based and, as a result, control over it fell to the provincial and municipal governments. However, the advent of television allowing for access to athletes, the opportunities presented through urbanization and

industrialization, and changing socioeconomic conditions (where individuals were working less, for more pay, resulting in economic resources), presented an opportunity to create a program aimed at promoting a more active population. At a speech to the Canadian Medical Association in 1959, the Duke of Edinburgh expressed concerns over the health of Canadians, Canadian international performances, and post-war sport internationalism. Two years later, in June of 1961, Willard and Monteith presented a policy at a National Conference on Sport and Leisure, which was later passed as Canada's first official federal government policy on sport, also known as Bill C-131 *An Act to Encourage Physical Activity and Fitness*.<sup>12</sup> This was also the first time the government took a lead role in assuming responsibility in Canadian health and fitness.

Bill C-131 was not initially effective. Alongside international factors that developed during the creation of the Act, such as the loss of the amateur ideal, professionalization, commercialization, and changing economic circumstances, in Canada specifically, the Act led to confusion over cost-sharing agreements and funding distribution. Eventually, this resulted in provinces, municipalities, and the National Advisory Council (a body originally established in the 1960s that was responsible for advising the Minister of National Health and Welfare on the implementation of the program) ceding some of their initial control over sport to the federal government.<sup>13</sup> At this point, there were five levels of structure taking control of Canadian sport: 1) the federal government; 2) federal sport bureaucracies; 3) National Sporting Organizations (NSOs), the Canadian Olympic Association (COA), and Sport Federations of Canada; 4) members of the National Sport and Recreation Centre in Ottawa (that had been

established in 1971); and 5) athletes who have participated and those who continued to participate in sports.<sup>14</sup>

However, the Act did successfully allow for the establishment of national sport governing bodies. In hopes of creating successful administrative structures within sport, one of the first initiatives implemented in the Act was the allocation of grants and funding to each province and the development of programs to “advance amateur sport nationally and Canadian athletes’ capacity to compete internationally.”<sup>15</sup> Though the Act was arguably unsuccessful for the first few years, the election of Prime Minister Trudeau and the subsequent *Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, eventually resulted in a policy framework that was solely focused on sport. The policy allowed for more direct government involvement in the sport system, giving national organizations access to financial support and facilitating the development of improved methods of training and competing, with the intent of maximizing international sport success.

In the mid-twentieth century, Canada, alongside most of the western world experienced a crisis of nationalism immediately following the Second World War, due to the growing presence and strength of Eastern Bloc countries in international sporting competitions during the Cold War Era. Additionally, the isolation of Ottawa and Quebec in the mid to late 1960s threatened Canadian national unity. Anglophone nationalism in Canada in turn was energized by the growing threat of separatism by Quebec, as well as another perceived threat to national unity, which was the domination of the Canadian economy and culture by the United States, due to direct American investment. Canada quickly became viewed as a branch plant of American capitalism.<sup>16</sup>



This national crisis caused the federal government to adopt a firmer stance on provincial/federal relations. In 1967, the first inaugural Canada Games were held in Quebec, with the motto, “*Unity through Sport.*” The effects of these Games’ success in promoting national unity and demonstrating athletic skill extended into the next election campaign in 1968, where Pierre Trudeau promised that, if elected, his government would evaluate and place a stronger focus on sport. With the landslide Liberal victory of 1968, Prime Minister Trudeau won on a federalist platform, giving French-Canadians representation at the highest policy-making levels.<sup>17</sup> However, Trudeau’s view of federalism was that Canadians should unite under a strong federal government that was not sympathetic to French-Canadian or any other form of intra-nationalism. As a result, there would be no special status for Quebec; however, federal authorities had to respect provincial jurisdictions.

Trudeau’s first order of business was to appoint as John Munro Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare. As Deputy Minister, Munro initiated a Task Force with the responsibility of evaluating Bill C-131 and sport in Canada in general. The resulting Task Force Report (1969) and the P.S. Ross Report (1969), aimed at analyzing elite sport and mass participation in sport in Canada respectively, led to *A Proposed Sport Policy for Canadians* in 1970.<sup>18</sup> In this same time frame, several arms-length agencies (including the Coaching Association of Canada, ParticipACTION, Hockey Canada, and the National Sport and Recreation Centre referred to earlier) were established. Specific to the Task Force Report, the COA was criticized for its lack of support to elite level athletes and, as a result, the Olympic trust [money to travel], broken time payments, Athlete Assistance Fund), and Hosting Programs were established. Similarly, an

*Intensive Care Program* was established to provide funding directly towards high performance sport.

Additionally, the Montmorency Conference on Leisure and recommendations made by the National Advisory Council, in Ottawa in October 1971, resulted in the federal Government's realization that a broad-based sport program and an elite athlete program in Canada were necessarily linked. The initiative of the conference was to conceive of ways in which Canada could improve its international sport performances, most specifically at the Olympics. The Intensive Care Program would provide financial support to athletes who had the potential to win Olympic medals.<sup>19</sup> Eligible athletes were determined by sport governing bodies in collaboration with Sport Canada.

Consequently, the result of the decisions made by the federal government throughout the 1970s was that there would be more direct financial support for Canadian athletes. Due to the increasing level of commercialization and professionalization in sport, the amateur ideal was gradually becoming less enforced and relevant on the international sport stage, and in 1974, the International Olympic Committee announced that it would permit payment to athletes for lost time while training for Olympic Games. In 1974, when the International Olympic Committee changed its eligibility criteria to allow athletes to receive compensation for lost-time income, the Canadian Olympic Association provided almost \$600,000 to athletes.<sup>20</sup> This, along with the *Intensive Care Program*, resulted in the development of *Game Plan '76*.

In the summer of 1976, Montreal hosted Canada's first ever Olympic Games. By this time, the *Intensive Care Program* had been renamed *Game Plan '76*, with the intent of helping the Canadian team improve to the top ten in the medal table. *Game Plan '76*

placed the responsibility of judging athletic potential into the hands of the sporting organizations; athletes were classified into A, B, and C brackets based on their ability to perform and win medals.<sup>21</sup> Those with higher potential received better support and funding and the sport governing bodies developed training programs. By 1976, with the Olympics approaching, the budget for *Game Plan '76* was \$3,700,000. The Canadian Olympic Team won no gold medals, however, and only 11 medals in total.

In 1976, the Liberal government created the position of Minister of State for Health and Physical Fitness, and appointed Iona Campagnolo to the position.<sup>22</sup> Her responsibility was to review the Canadian Sport Policy again, and to make necessary adjustments to ensure that Canadian athletes had the resources to achieve excellence on the international stage. The impetus came from the disappointing Canadian showing at the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal. Again, separate task forces were designated to evaluate the elite sport programs and programs for sport development. In 1977, the Green Paper: *Toward a National Sport Policy on Amateur Sport: A Working Paper* (focusing on mass sport) was completed, critiquing the government for providing too much structure to sport participation, placing too much emphasis on elite sport, and asking that more money be directed toward mass participation. The White Paper (*Partners in the Pursuit of Excellence: a National Policy on Amateur Sport*) was completed under Campagnolo's supervision and led to the request for more money from the private sector.

In 1982, as a result of *Partners in the Pursuit of Excellence*, a new Olympic Sport Program, *Best Ever '88* and, in 1983, the *Athlete Assistance Program* (AAP) were approved. The AAP enabled upcoming generations of athletes to devote significant time

to both training and competing, while continuing their education. Athletes received broken-time payments, better training facilities, access to coaches, and the sport governing bodies created training programs designed specifically for them. Athletes requiring financial assistance were classified, again, based on their level of competition and commitment to their sport, and again, those competing at the international level, i.e. Olympic athletes, were still given the highest level of funding. This program was a direct attempt to further improve Canadian successes in sport and, most importantly, to achieve a good showing at the 1988 Olympic Winter Games in Calgary, and thus emerged the *Best Ever 88* campaign.

The goal of the *Best Ever '88* Olympic Team program was for the Canadian Olympic Team to give its best performance up to that point, at the 1988 Calgary Winter Games. The \$25 million budget set aside for the program was directed toward the improvement of training, facilities, and administrative involvement, and it defined the role of Sport Canada for the four years leading up to the Games, in collaboration with the National Sporting Organizations of ten Olympic sports.<sup>23</sup> Based in Ottawa, Sport Canada, in collaboration with other Canadian sport bodies, was responsible for the distribution of most of the funding from public and private sectors, offsetting the costs of coach and staff salaries, travel, staging events, and other expenses.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, it directly administered programs for training and setting performance targets, while also distributing funds for biomechanical, physiological, and psychological research and therapy.

The results of the 1988 Calgary Olympics were far from desirable in the minds of Canadians. With a total of five medals, none of them gold, Canada placed thirteenth

in the medal standings.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the men's hockey team, typically a strong source of Canadian pride, finished only fourth overall. Unfortunately, the high level of emphasis placed on winning had repercussions that would leave a permanent stain on the reputation of Canadians at the Olympics. At the summer Olympic Games, held later in that same year, 1988, Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson tested positive for steroids and was stripped of his gold medal in the 100-metre final, which may have been the result of increasing pressure to be the best, or risk losing both funding and endorsement deals. Following the 1988 Ben Johnson catastrophe, the Canadian Government asserted that such a scandal would never happen again, and commissioned a public inquiry, the *Inquiry into the Use of Drugs and Banned Practices Intended to Increase Athletic Ability* (The Dubin Inquiry).<sup>26</sup> The inquiry was completed in 1990 culminating in the establishment of FairPlay Canada, the Canadian Anti-Doping Organization, and the Canadian Centre for Drug Free Sport.

The drug scandal of the 1988 Summer Olympic Games raised questions about the government's investment in sport and challenged the Canadian reputation in international sport, leading to more stringent contingency-based funding for athletes. Started in 1995 and completed in 1996, the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (determined by NSOs and Sport Canada) delineated all programs that would be eligible for funding from the federal government. In addition, the government made sport programs more accountable through the 1988 *Mills Report: Sport in Canada: Leadership, Partnership, Accountability: Everybody's Business*.<sup>27</sup>

From 1998-2001, the Mills Report and various National Summits on Sport (*Toward 2000*) led to the eventual development of the *Canadian Sport Policy* in 2002,

which outlined goals of enhanced participation, enhanced excellence, enhanced interaction, and enhanced capacity. Since then, extending from this policy, *Canadian Sport for Life*, the *Long Term Athlete Development Program*, the *Own the Podium Campaign*, and *Road to Excellence* programs have been created.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, Aboriginal sport was included in 2005 and sport policies for persons with disabilities were created in 2006 and from 2008-2011, policies regarding hosting, women in sport, and doping in sport have also been reviewed and revised. The *Canadian Sport Policy* itself was revised as recently as 2012. As mentioned earlier, the current elite sport program in Canada is titled *Own the Podium*, developed in 2005, by Sport Canada, WinSport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Canadian Paralympic Committee, and the Vancouver Organizing Committee. *OTP*'s targets are to ensure podium excellence, system excellence, and research/innovation/medical excellence for all upcoming Olympics. The responsibility of the National Sporting Organizations, that, under *OTP* monitor each individual sport, is to define sport targets for athletes, set podium goals, assess the likelihood of those athletes winning medals in the Olympics and, consequently, determining who is eligible for funding.

The government is responsible for the allocation of funding and the requirements that must be fulfilled in order for different organizations to receive funding. Between 1997 and 2001, in order to receive funding through the National Sport Organizations Support Program, organizations had to fulfill their duties based on a signed Accountability Agreement with Sport Canada.<sup>29</sup> Specific objectives included: high performance athletes (where the greatest level of importance is placed), sport

development, women in sport, athletes with disabilities, and official languages (meaning that both the French and English languages needed to be included).

In 2004, various sport organizations from across Canada collaborated to formally begin developing *Own the Podium (OTP)* in an effort to combine all parties and support high-performance programs with the aim of finishing in the top three of the gold medal count in the 2010 Winter Games. *OTP* was formally established in 2005. The hope was to strengthen national policy, programs, and sport delivery for high performance sport. The campaign generally centred strongly on three spheres: (1) podium excellence; (2) system excellence; and (3) sport science, medicine, innovation, and research excellence, which would in combination achieve overall organizational excellence.<sup>30</sup>

In 2010, the Canadian city of Vancouver played host to the Winter Olympic Games, 22 years subsequent to the Calgary Games. *OTP* placed the greatest emphasis on winning medals and portraying Canada as both a competitor and a sporting powerhouse internationally. The mission of *OTP* is for Canada to be a “world leader in high-performance sport,” with the hope that it will rank among the top in the world in podium performances during both Olympic and Paralympic Games.<sup>31</sup> *OTP* assumes responsibility for assessing the potential of individuals and teams in Canada’s high performance sport system, determining podium targets for Olympic and Paralympic Games, and for making recommendations regarding the allocation of funds from national funding sponsors.<sup>32</sup> Currently, “Own the podium, a not-for-profit organization, prioritizes, and determines investment strategies to national sport organizations in an effort to deliver more Olympic and Paralympic medals for Canada...[to] advance the excellence goal highlighted in the Canadian Sport Policy.”<sup>33</sup>

Interestingly, the goals for *OTP* differ between Winter and Summer Olympic Games with the hope of finishing first overall and top three in gold medals for the winter count, and finishing top 12 overall and top eight in gold medals for the summer count. Similarly, as mentioned, the funding for *OTP* is distributed according to athlete potential, rather than being divided equally among the provinces as it was for the Calgary Olympic Games.

Canadian athletes won an all-time record 14 gold medals at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, proving the success of the *OTP* campaign. The Canadian team finished third overall in the medal count, nine positions higher than Calgary in 1988, and brought home both the men's and women's gold medals in ice hockey. Divided between the Olympic and Paralympic sports of that season, *OTP* contributed almost \$80,000,000 total to funding Canadian athletes.<sup>34</sup>

The new leading Canadian sport policy was a push toward the active involvement of all stakeholders in making sport an accessible and engaging component of society for all Canadians. The policy claims to strive towards actively involving all members of society that have not yet had the opportunity to contribute to the Canadian sporting environment. Furthermore, the policy not only intends to engage more Canadians, but to enhance their sporting experiences by ensuring “the harmonious and effective functioning of their sport system.”<sup>35</sup> It is evident here that there has been a slight move towards developing sport for all Canadians, rather than a select group of high performance athletes, from the governing bodies involved in the Canadian sport programs.



It is clear then that the federal government supports high performance athletes, coaches, and sport system development through providing direct financial aid to its athletes. Furthermore, the government supports and encourages the hosting of Olympic Games with the hope of promoting Canadian sport and its values in international contexts. For this precise interest, the Government of Canada has in place a sport funding program entitled Hosting Program to promote the international profile of sporting organizations in Canada by ensuring that international events are held here. The intent is that this investment will result in “significant sport, economic, social and cultural legacies.”<sup>36</sup>

On March 13, 2012, the Harper Conservative Government announced additional support for Canadian athletes leading into the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games through Canada’s Sport Support Program. President of the Canadian Olympic Committee Marcel Aubut asserted that “the funds announced today are part of ensuring that Canada’s outstanding athletes are ready to compete at their best in the Olympic environment.”<sup>37</sup> Following this announcement, CEO of the Canadian Paralympic Committee Henry Storgaard stated, “this enhancing funding will no doubt help our top medal-potential sports gain an extra edge as they strive for the podium and make Canada proud, which will in turn inspire more Canadians with a disability to be active in sports.”<sup>38</sup>

The funding invested in 2012-13 included: \$27 million through the Athlete Assistance Program, distributed to 1800 athletes who had achieved world class results; \$146 million through the Sport Support Program to Canadian sport organizations to strengthen the national sport system and benefit athletes and coaches [\$62/\$146 million

goes as enhanced excellence funding for targeted sport and athletes with medal potential]; and finally \$20 million to the Hosting Program.<sup>39</sup> The justification for these funds was that “Canada is proud to be a LEADING SPORT NATION – both at home and abroad – where all Canadians can enjoy, value and celebrate the benefits of active participation and excellence in sport” and the program objectives were to “to increase opportunities to participate in quality sport activities for all Canadians, including underrepresented groups, to increase the capacity of Canada’s sport system, and to advance Canadian interests, values and ethics.”<sup>40</sup> The general *Sport Support Program* of Canada’s current economic action plan asserts that “sport strengthens our communities and is a powerful means of enhancing the lives of Canadians of all ages, particularly children and youth, by enabling them to become more active and healthy. Sport contributes to our sense of national pride through the pursuits of excellence by our high performance athletes.”<sup>41</sup>

Since 1984, there has been an international trend toward devoting large sums of money to the Olympic Games. Since sport is readily considered an instrument of economic development, the involvement on the part of the government is crucial, particularly for international relations as well.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, the media perpetuates the ability of sport to promote national unity, the degree to which sport can foster social inclusion, the hope that hosting international competitions will contribute to the Canadian economy, and the idea that medal performances in elite sport will encourage the Canadian population at large to participate in sport and recreation for purposes of health promotion. The role of the media will become increasingly relevant for this study. In 2012, Canada’s Minister of State, Bal Gosal stated, “Canada’s Olympic and

Paralympic athletes are a source of inspiration and great pride. The accomplishments of the Canadian team may inspire young people across the country to participate in sport.”<sup>43</sup> The Government of Canada is the single largest contributor to sport in Canada and with the inception of *Own the Podium*, the government reached a record level of investment in sport. Oftentimes, the justification being used is that performance at elite levels results in the participation in sport at lower levels as Sport Canada’s mission is to, “enhance opportunities for all Canadians to participation and excel in sport.”<sup>44</sup>

It is undeniable that since *OTP* was instituted, Canada has been more successful on the Olympic podium. The expectations have been raised for everyone, from athletes to governing bodies and the nation has jumped up the medal table even though more nations are currently competing. New and innovative approaches to training and performance have been put into place and *OTP*’s approach to excellence has resulted in more Olympic medals being brought home. However, there are no indications that investments in high performance sport have had any permanent impacts on Canadian pride following the Olympic Games or the participation of average Canadians in sport. Rather, it seems as if this is more an ideological ruse to rationalize significantly increased spending on elite sport.<sup>45</sup>

Events such as the Olympic Games are typically linked to major aspects of nationhood, including the waving of flags, singing of anthems, and creating distinction from other countries. The *Own the Podium* program has taken this to a new level. The intent of this study is to examine reflections of Canadian nationalism through the Olympic Games to determine the role that the media, the federal government, and

programs such as *OTP* and those that preceded it, played in creating and perpetuating this nationalism.

### **Methods**

Review of the Canadian Sport Policy has demonstrated the increase in funding allocated to high performance sport in Canada. The policy also outlines the criteria standards for programs to be eligible for funding by the Canadian government. Whitson et al. and Macintosh & Whitson have used sport policy analysis to explain power structures in Canadian society. Using a narrative descriptive analysis of sport policy as a background to understand changes in the Canadian sport system, this study will use newspaper articles to analyze the production and reproduction of national narratives to demonstrate the ways in which the phenomenon of national identity and the promotion of nationalism positioned positive images of the sport system to Canadian citizens, alongside its development. The policy background here lends support to and interact with the more specific findings from the media accounts. Narratives help us to imagine things, having a potentially hegemonic effect on the establishment of imagined communities. The hegemonic effects of promotion are evident in the value placed on high performance sport which, in turn, validates Canadian sport policy and capitalist relations more broadly, making alternatives to high performance sport ever more marginalized. We may also observe how changes in policy led to an increase or decrease of nationalistic expressions, and, from a hegemonic standpoint, the type of nationalism that the state promotes, including the competitive nationalism that the press invoked through *OTP*.

This research examines the twenty-two year period from the 1988 Calgary Olympics, through to Vancouver 2010, when Canadian athletes first formally performed under the *OTP* program, focusing on those years when Winter Olympic Games were scheduled. In short, case study research is “an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, event, person, process, institution, or social group.”<sup>46</sup> For this particular research, the case study analysed is the process of the development of winter sport nationalism in Canada. Historical information has the potential to shed light on social environments. The attempt to place social events in their proper historical context involves “a process of systematically searching for data to answer questions about a past phenomenon for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of present institutions, practices, trends, and issues,”<sup>47</sup> which is highly relevant for understanding Canada, its current sport system, and the form of competitive sport nationalism that exists today.

The primary source materials used for this study are newspaper archives. Selected articles were those leading up to, during, and following each set of Winter Olympic Games that Canada participated in from 1988 to 2010, specifically from the two weeks prior, the two weeks during, and the two weeks following each Games. This selection was based on the recommendations of Willis, who suggests that because the context of the research is so valuable, optimal data sources tend to be those that are close to the point of application.<sup>48</sup>

The author used major Canadian English-language newspapers and focused solely on the opinions of Canadian reporters. The newspapers were selected according to highest readership levels in the present era and location in order to get a more widespread viewpoint across Canada. Therefore, the newspapers chosen are *The*

*Toronto Star* (Toronto), *The Gazette* (Montreal), and *The Vancouver Sun* (Vancouver).

The elimination of the *Globe and Mail* from the selection of newspapers was due to it also being a Toronto-based newspaper with lower readership levels in comparison to the *Toronto Star*. Though the *Globe and Mail* is considered a national newspaper as it is circulated on a larger scale, the journalists for the paper are still Toronto-based.

Furthermore, the convergence of newspaper ownership in the mid-1990s did not seem to directly influence newspaper reports on the Olympic Games. Though newspapers will reflect the interests of the journalists, the intention is to use narrative analysis to organize information that may help us understand the different perspectives that shaped our understanding of the Canadian sport system.

Original newspaper documents were accessed through microfilm roles at the Western University library. Though research came from sources from three different cities, the accounts of the Olympic Games were strongly similar among them. In total, Team Canada competed in seven Winter Olympic Games from 1988 to 2010. The intention was to analyze all relevant newspaper articles and select those that best illustrate the development of Canada's high performance sport system and nationalism during this time. All articles written within the six-week period that encompassed each Games were reviewed in search of consistency through repetitive themes or emergent ideas.

Once articles were collected, searches were made in reference to the following list of key terms that was generated according to their relevance and application to the research. Terms were selected based on locations of Winter Games, definitions of

nationalism and nation building, programs, organizations and structures that support the Olympic team, events at the Games, and result-based terms:

Olympics, sport, nation, identity, pride, nationalism, nation-building, alpine skiing, biathlon, bobsleigh, cross country skiing, curling, figure skating, freestyle skiing, ice hockey, luge, Nordic combined, short track speed skating, skeleton, ski jumping, snowboard, speed skating, funding, policy, Canadian Olympic Committee, Calgary, spectacle, future, Albertville, Lillehammer, Nagano, Salt Lake City, Turin, Vancouver, Winter, Games, medal, success, support, government, officials, legacy, fans, system, training, coaching, Canada, Canadians, athlete, team, excellence, podium, *Best Ever*, *Own the Podium*, performances, culture, victory, program, winning, investment, memory, world-class, promote, spending, cost, economy, power, expectations, disappointing, financial, gold, money, National Sport Organizations, Sport Canada, Olympic Organizing Committee, history, competition, inclusion, accountability, hope, international, image, criteria, negative, selection, representation, results, commitment, recommendation, organization, production, projection, targets, contribute, nostalgia, sentiment, tradition, leadership, hosting, potential, anthem, flag, participation, partnership, controversial, legitimate, Maple Leaf, opportunity, supremacy, benefit, pressure, stakeholder, science, inspiring, resources, mission, vision, development, symbols, sponsorship, unity, criticism

Data were organized into units based on events, sentences, paragraphs, comments or observations regarding Canada's involvement in the Olympic Games. The list of key words emerged inductively out of the newspaper search and were selected based on their relevance to Canada's role in the Olympics and the subsequent effects the Games had on representations of Canadian nationalism. Overall, 2,510 newspaper articles were found and reviewed. Following this, the list of terms and the articles linked to them were categorized to examine links, associations, and relationships between data components.

The following tables demonstrate the number of newspaper articles found from each newspaper, for each chapter. The tables further show how many articles were

found as relevant and reflective of the research, as well as how many articles were quoted directly.

**Table One: Tabulation of Articles Used in Chapter Two**

	<b>Toronto Star</b>	<b>Montreal Gazette</b>	<b>Vancouver Sun</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Found</b>	144	73	96	313
<b>Used</b>	77	12	17	106
<b>Quoted</b>	44	6	8	58
<b>Not Quoted</b>	33	6	9	48

**Table Two: Tabulation of Articles Used in Chapter Three**

	<b>Toronto Star</b>	<b>Montreal Gazette</b>	<b>Vancouver Sun</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Found</b>	467	380	313	1160
<b>Used</b>	110	47	24	181
<b>Quoted</b>	26	1	0	27
<b>Not Quoted</b>	84	46	24	154

**Table Three: Tabulation of Articles Used in Chapter Four**

	<b>Toronto Star</b>	<b>Montreal Gazette</b>	<b>Vancouver Sun</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Found</b>	301	204	176	681
<b>Used</b>	62	50	24	136
<b>Quoted</b>	17	0	0	17
<b>Not Quoted</b>	45	50	24	119

**Table Four: Tabulation of Articles Used in Chapter Five**

	<b>Toronto Star</b>	<b>Montreal Gazette</b>	<b>Vancouver Sun</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Found</b>	152	74	130	356
<b>Used</b>	30	19	21	70
<b>Quoted</b>	17	0	0	17
<b>Not Quoted</b>	13	19	21	53

As mentioned, articles selected for use and quotation were selected based on the prevalence of key terms and their relevance to research. Though not directly quoted, all



articles read and analyzed helped to outline and highlight the major events, moments, and other contributing factors to Canadian nationalism throughout the 22-year period while quotations that were directly used were those that best illustrated and expressed this. Upon further application of the key terms to the selected articles, similarities and repetitive links between terms became apparent, allowing for organization of articles based on broader themes. Each key term could be categorized beneath its own umbrella theme. Ultimately, four major themes emerged from this research:

- ***Legacy, changes and developments in Canadian sport***
  - Spectacle, future, success, legacy, excellence, podium, culture, medal, world-class, gold, hosting, mission, vision, accountability, inclusion, organization, leadership, potential, participation, opportunity, supremacy, victory, winning, performances, benefit, results, competition
- ***Funding, support, and structure***
  - Funding, policy, support, government, officials, *Best Ever*, *Own the Podium*, system, training, coaching, sponsorship, stakeholders, science, resources, financial, money, spending, cost, investment, program, partnership, Canadian Olympic Committee, National Sport Organizations, Sport Canada, Olympic Organizing Committee, targets, projection, development, production, recommendation, criteria, legitimate, commitment, selection
- ***Expressions of Canadian nationalism, pride and identity***
  - Nation, identity, pride, nationalism, nation-building, fans, Maple Leaf, memory, nostalgia, sentiment, tradition, history, inspiring, image, unity, symbols, anthem, flag, hope, representation, contribute, promote
- ***Challenges faced by Canada at the Games***
  - Pressure, controversial, negative, power, disappointing, economy, criticism, expectations
- **Key words relevant to all themes:**
  - Olympics, sport, alpine skiing, biathlon, bobsleigh, cross country skiing, curling, figure skating, freestyle skiing, ice hockey, luge, Nordic combined, short track speed skating, skeleton, ski jumping, snowboard, speed skating, Calgary, Albertville, Lillehammer, Nagano, Salt Lake City, Turin, Vancouver, Winter, Games, Canada, Canadians, athlete, team, international

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted using the framework of hegemony. This framework underscores the ways in which those with political and social capital have used their power to influence and structure society to serve their own interests. With regard to the development of Canada's high-performance sport system and its relation to greater social concerns, the concept of hegemony as a theoretical framework is particularly beneficial in helping demonstrate the power relations extant in society. At its most basic level, the concept, hegemony is used to understand a society in which the dominant class gains the control of its subordinates by obtaining their consent. For this study on sport in Canada, this concept can help us understand the ways in which sport has been used as a tool for shaping society in a way that would articulate the interests of those in positions of power. Hegemony as a theory was conceived by Italian theorist, Antonio Gramsci, who wrote about power, class, and society in the early twentieth century. Through this time, there was, as Gramsci notes, a shift towards a state that educates society rather than forcing it into a bourgeois way of thinking and acting.<sup>49</sup> In the Canadian capitalist economy, based largely on commodification, commercialization, and rationality, the forces that shape political society, i.e. the government, has also played a role in shaping sport, and vice versa. Hargreaves states that sport is considered a microcosm of capitalist society since it is highly commercialized and driven by consumer and market tendencies.<sup>50</sup>

Jackson-Lears defines hegemony as the spontaneous consent of the masses to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant class.<sup>51</sup> This means that, in society, the dominant class has the means and resources to convince subordinates into

believing that their experiences, impressions of life, and ways of living are “common sense.” As a result, subordinates become naturalized towards it and accepting of their circumstances. Historically, this dominant class enjoys the privilege and consequent confidence of setting this direction because of their ability to obtain control of capital. Gramsci argued that having control is not only a question of being able to secure capital, but that there was also a coercive element on the part of the dominant class that fosters the support for subordinates by influencing them to believe that their interests are congruent with those of the state.<sup>52</sup> In capitalist societies such as Canada, the media plays a large role in eliciting consent of average citizens by reproducing messages and feelings to the level of civil society. Through media and myth-making, historical notions become ideological truths and, oftentimes, history is transformed into nature, providing a coercive power to the media and therefore making it the perfect ally for ruling factions.<sup>53</sup> Often, ruling factions have control over media outlets such as newspapers, as well as other means of message production and transmission, that offer them the ability to selectively create representations of the past and future, deciding what is presented and excluded or neglected from public narratives.<sup>54</sup>

The hegemonic class must be able to create a national popular will, which is achieved through the attainment of capital (or power), gaining control of ideological state apparatuses, such as the media, so as to promote their values and messages, and then diffusing their ideologies to the masses. Those who control the means of media production also control the messages propagated through them. Gruneau states metaphorically that power is a commodity or resource, particularly of the ruling class, and the state is the central bank responsible for the distribution of this resource.<sup>55</sup>

Additionally, the power of statements and symbols rest in their ability to become naturalized as common sense.<sup>56</sup>

Cassar references Althusser by explaining that while political society provides more direct domination through the use of repressive state apparatuses (laws and legislature), self-management occurs at the level of civil society, of which media is one source, through ideological state apparatuses that allow for self-surveillance.<sup>57</sup>

Ideological state apparatuses use techniques that at their fundamental levels do not present themselves as forms of domination, but rather are coercive tools, thus making them more difficult to challenge and oppose.<sup>58</sup> Civil society, such as media, then is an ideological state apparatus that creates the conditions necessary for the dissemination of messages and ideologies to society, much as its reproduction relies on them.

Jackson-Lears defines ideology as the spontaneous philosophy that is proper to everyone and expressed through language, common and good sense (empirical knowledge), and proper religion, i.e. the actions and experiences of everyday life.<sup>59</sup> Ideologies are both formal and articulated systems of meanings, values, and beliefs, and the hegemonic function is to control and incorporate them into one dominant ideology.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, Jackson-Lears states that public discourse has the ability to decide which information and experiences to make public to consciousness and which not to.<sup>61</sup> For this reason, we understand that ideas are not intrinsic, but generated, or socially produced. This is evident in Stuart Hall's theory of articulation, disarticulation, and rearticulation, which reminds us that ideas come from a combination of production and social relations.<sup>62</sup> For Hall, messages sent to the public are first encoded with the intentions of the hegemonic class, disseminated into society, often through media, where

they are decoded by society and open to interpretation and polysemy.<sup>63</sup> At this point, society either accepts the messages as the dominant hegemonic form, they take a negotiated version of the messages where they may disagree with certain components, or they take an oppositional view point, and challenge the message they are receiving.<sup>64</sup>

According to Harvey and Proulx, the capitalist state has three functions: the accumulation of capital, the preservation of social harmony, and coercion.<sup>65</sup> Capital refers to the economic power of bourgeois society based on their ability to secure control over economic resources. Therefore, in capitalist societies, people are placed in positions of authority based on the rights that come with power over the deployment of capital. This ultimately creates a separation between the state and the working class who are forced into the hands of the dominant class by reason of economic necessity. As a result, there is a widening gap between the rich and poor in such a system. Social inequality and stratification then is inherently tied to the distribution of social wealth.

Gruneau warns us that social harmony cannot be achieved if the state does not appear neutral and if its interests are too closely aligned with those of the ruling class.<sup>66</sup> Hargreaves references Gramsci in saying that a successful dominant class, when creating a hegemonic society, must make concessions, accommodate various ideologies, form alliances, pre-empt alternatives to the social order, and decide which combination of force and persuasion are necessary.<sup>67</sup> The concern here is that capitalism exists to serve the values and interests of a minority ruling class, with an underrepresentation of individuals from lower income levels, thus alienating the working class and providing agency to the rich, who have a heightened concern for their own interests. They use the state system to appropriate these interests, neglecting not only opposing interests, but

more importantly the needs of the subordinate class. A capitalist society then is ultimately one of corporate greed, lopsided state-working class relationships, inequality, and mechanisms of social power. A successful hegemonic class must provide rewards, care, support, and structure to society, while demonstrating intellectual and political leadership.<sup>68</sup> A social class comprises the individuals who experience life and activities similarly in the world of production.<sup>69</sup> As a result they can build solidarity, which may eventually lead towards a counter-hegemony.

Sport rests in the third of hegemony's three components, material and political (which are more difficult to challenge because they are susceptible to reward and punishment) and cultural (which are seemingly easier to challenge due to voluntary participation). In the past, sport has provided not only a medium for the transmission of common sense but, historically, a site where it is constituted.<sup>70</sup> For Wamsley, cultural terrains such as sport are used by ruling factions to help create a national popular will, as sports provide areas where ideologies are contested and hegemony is produced or reproduced.<sup>71</sup> As a cultural terrain, sport has conveniently provided a site where those in positions of political, economic, or societal power can impose their interests on subordinate classes. Congruently, sport allows for an illusory kind of freedom, since characteristics of sport such as the emphasis on efficiency and profit demonstrated a clear reflection of the priorities and rationality of a capitalist society and a site where, ultimately, the participants had little to no control, particularly in regards to high performance sport. Therefore, sport activities may be a metaphor for an ideal society since they present themselves as spontaneous and independent while actually being highly structured.<sup>72</sup> In addition, sport is controlled by market measurements and

performances are judged based on conditions set by that market. Ultimately, sport plays a role in the cycle of production and consumption, the orchestrated use of time and space, and our dependence on science and technology, and this is occluded by the subjective percipience of voluntary participation.<sup>73</sup>

Often, sport is a clear reflection of its social environment and often reinforces the political ideology existent in a particular society. For capitalist societies then, sport can contribute to reinforcing class inequalities by naturalizing values such as competition, self-discipline, and obedience to authority figures. Furthermore, Hargreaves states that sport is defined by its, “specialization and standardisation, bureaucratised and hierarchical administration, long term planning, increased reliance on society and technology, a drive for maximum productivity, a quantification of performance and, above all, the alienation of both producer and consumer.”<sup>74</sup> In this sense, sport developed much in the same way that work and production has, emphasizing discipline and order. In Canada, the high performance sport system is based on an elitist meritocracy with emphasis placed on individual achievement, record breaking, and other performance imperatives, reproducing capitalist values. Therefore, sport under the direction of the state could be perceived as controlling the populace through the praise of capitalist values.

In unequal, capitalist societies, such as Canada, positions of power need to be negotiated, and sport often provides a site for this negotiation. However, as with other economic, political, and cultural components of society, individuals do not negotiate from positions of equal power. Those in dominant positions have the resources necessary to shape the direction of life and cultural practices, such as sport. As

discussed, of particular importance is the ability of the dominant class to persuade subordinated groups that decisions are being made in their best interests, and that concessions are to be made when necessary. In order to properly critique sport, we must pay attention not to the space that the dominant cedes to the subordinate, but the ways in which this ceded space has already been shaped by dominant values. Morgan references Gruneau, who calls them strategically manipulated concessions in which the dominant concede to the subordinate on the margins, but retain the core principles.<sup>75</sup>

The ideology of excellence in Canada demonstrates that sport is, historically, created and controlled by upper middle class white males, making it difficult to challenge because they predominantly exercise control over the Olympics and express neoconservative ideas as common sense. Therefore, the philosophy of excellence in the Canadian sport system still reflects an ideology that reinforces state capitalism.<sup>76</sup> However, though seemingly self-empowering and socially-validated, there are strong inequalities within Canada's sport system, but since the government legitimates and institutionalizes it, the power relations stay in the hands of those already privileged, while limiting resources for those without influence.<sup>77</sup> For example, athletes sign contracts and concede control over their product into the hands of team owners and managers. Similarly, they are judged by a system created by the market. Nor do taxpayers and those who participate in sport for pleasure, have control over the ways that their money is spent, they are taxed for sport, and ultimately rules are created to determine the conditions under which they are allowed to participate in sport. Therefore, a proper understanding of concepts such as hegemony and ideology and the ways in



which they can contribute to an understanding of sport in capitalist society, can be quite useful for further evaluating and critiquing Canada's sport system.

Again, sport is organized to serve the material interests of a minority few rather than the prosperity of a larger population. It is based on skill and glorifies a meritocratic hierarchy; politicians, and the media promote competition and this helps to justify inequalities that exist as a result of it (i.e. winners should be rewarded). Similarly, participating athletes create the product, for example the Olympic Games spectacle, and yet are alienated by having limited control over the ways in which they participate in it. In Canada, the money expended on the Olympic Games and the athletes has only served to intensify the ways in which training and participation have become strongly related to the labour process. Furthermore, the increasing commercialization of sport and the sponsorship and professionalization that have become critical components of high performance sport have led to its capitalist structure. Just like the athletes, taxpayers who help fund these events have no control over their production. Ultimately, the state and ruling classes have used sport in order to mobilize support for their government. Ritchie argues that "the state's role in all of this is simply to help in coordinating and popularizing sport while surrounding its involvement in mystifying notions of the collective good that mask its class bias."<sup>78</sup> This indicates that the structure of capitalist societies has become internalized and natural due to the values and interests of those with power that are continuously reinforced through ideological constructions.

With regards to the construction of nationalism in Canada in particular, modern nationalism is an ideal way to describe sentiment, because its existence has been politically and socially constructed, rather than being a natural phenomenon that arose

as a result of existent ethnic solidarity. Due to Canada's largely multicultural population, nation-building is heavily reliant on the construction of national institutions by the state, through influence and coercive forces, favouring the integration and ultimate assimilation of ethnicities.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, hegemony can help to explain how the state in Canada has constructed nationalism for Canadians, through institutions such as sport.

Nationalism is an ideology defined as the "attainment and maintenance of identity, autonomy and unity on behalf of a population, some of whose members deem it to constitute an actual or potential 'nation.'"<sup>80</sup> Commonly, nationalism asserts that all individuals have a basic human need to belong to a group, a need that the ideology of nationalism fulfills, alongside providing a strong sense of security to members of a nation. The success of nations relies heavily on the state creating coherence within its population through the synchronization of beliefs, values, and societal structures.

Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined communities" is helpful in understanding the success of nationalism in a nation of Canada's size and diversity. Anderson states that, "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."<sup>81</sup> Nations are strong communities brought together over strategically produced common origins and histories that have been experienced and understood by all members and constituted by shared belief and mutual commitment. Thus, people imagine themselves as cohesive communities, allowing them to experience strong comradeship that, often makes individuals willing to sacrifice their lives for the nation (for example, in times of war), and the source of this comes from nationalism.<sup>82</sup>

The role of the state is to coordinate and unify individuals around these common beliefs and values. Due to the inherently political nature of international sport, the use of national sport teams can be a viable way of accomplishing this. For example, politicians and world leaders use sport to further their careers or political interests, often with disregard for the material conditions of people's lives.<sup>83</sup> According to Belanger, spectacles like the Olympic Games, form façades of fantasy to facilitate private sector and government spending which would not otherwise be forthcoming.<sup>84</sup> For those in dominant positions of government and Olympic Committees, addressing collective memories and nostalgia in the orchestration and reception of sport spectacle is key to the success of selling places (for example, new arenas and stadiums), "not only as a resource for economic gain but, in a Gramscian sense, as a way of generalizing hegemonic interpretations of history and society so that these interpretations come to be widely seen as a matter of common sense."<sup>85</sup> Often, occasions such as the Olympic Games are ideal venues for the creation and demonstration of national sentiment, as Olympic teams provide common reference points for members of a nation. Additionally, Belanger discussed how the present day sport spectacle works to transform and sanitize urban spaces and the experience that accompanies them.<sup>86</sup> Through their use of sights, sounds and activities, these entertainment and consumption spaces offer upscale target markets for a spectacular urban experience, but one that is meticulously orchestrated and ultimately far removed from the realities of daily life. This inevitably obscures the underlying reality of calculated exchange values and profit taking. Particularly relevant in the case of the Olympics in general are the ideologies of collective memory and nostalgia that contribute to the orchestration and reception of this sporting spectacle, and

thus its role in the construction of nationalism. The role of high performance sport in promoting and constructing national identity is a specifically important view for this thesis. Sport offers an important contribution to this idea of imagined communities because it creates an environment of emotionally-charged interaction. Flags present at these events orient people to a single idea – the nation which is ruled under this flag, and sports played for this flag take on heightened importance.<sup>87</sup>

Anderson's theory of imagined communities is reinforced by Hobsbawm's idea of "invented tradition." Hobsbawm defined invented tradition as "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."<sup>88</sup> Those in powerful positions use history to legitimate action and cement group cohesion. This becomes relevant in the use of national narratives to analyze the hegemonic effects of using high performance sport to establish nationalism. Historically, research on sport and national identity invokes both concepts of imagined community and invented traditions. Major international sporting events create an imagined community of people across the country that come together in support of a national team, representing a common reference point, upon which individuals can reflect their national sentiment.<sup>89</sup> In fact, Hobsbawm studied the influence of sport and labelled such events as sites for the construction, expression, and imagining of national identity.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, as sport becomes increasingly popular, it congruently becomes an increasingly popular tool for fostering national sentiment, particularly in an increasingly globalized world.

With the emergence of print media, the ability of sport to produce national sentiment was compacted with its ability to pervade larger populations. The emergence of newspapers and mass print have not only made the world and information more readily accessible to wider populations, but they are oftentimes responsible for, “organizing public debates and persuading readers to a particular point of view.”<sup>91</sup> As Hackett and Gruneau state, “no other mass medium offers the same combined possibilities for accessibility, in-depth analysis, potential diversity of viewpoints, and sustained reflection on important political and economic issues.”<sup>92</sup>

In the late twentieth century, in the face of an economic recession, newspaper chains struggled to be profitable, combined with the pressure brought on by the popularity of television and the internet, newspapers were forced to report more dramatic stories, feature head turning scandals, and devote sections to specifics, where lines between news and advertisement were blurred.<sup>93</sup> However, with the competition between newspapers to stay current and relevant came criticisms of the bias of journalists, over-emphasis on trivial issues, and an obsession with scandal and negativity. Newspapers are responsible for selecting important issues and subsequently constructing stories around them. As a result, news is an active, not passive representation of the world.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, the question is, what factors influence the process of selecting content to be reported?

For state-owned media, the government has the ability to restrict freedom of speech and therefore the press. This is done through the stifling of information or viewpoints, oftentimes ones that would embarrass the authorities or provoke political opposition. Other reasons include the interest of public security or social order.<sup>95</sup>

Governments are also capable of applying economic pressure to media outlets by withholding government advertising. Additionally, as governments provide such a valuable source of information, they can decide what news is made available to the public and to left- or right-wing news outlets, as fits with their agendas.<sup>96</sup> However, since media in Canada is generally privately owned, and because the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms offers constitutional protection, the media in Canada legally has freedom to report the truth for public interest and to provide alternative voices.<sup>97</sup>

Having said this, not all institutions are equal. Some have more money, power, credibility and cultural capital, allowing more control over the press, and less critical attention. By the same token, reporting journalists do not want to “bite the hands that feed them,” so to speak, “from the relatively direct influence of advertising and corporate ownership to the more subtle ways in which free market ideology has come to dominate public discourse the media are so highly integrated into and reliant on the economic system.”<sup>98</sup> Along with the government and corporate interests, censorship in the media can quite simply come down to a matter of reporting what the audience wants to hear. When journalists purvey information, there are strong considerations of supply, productions, and consumption (i.e. what is the big news? What is significant and relevant? etc.).<sup>99</sup> Finally, ethnocentrism and nationalism tend to filter out news that upsets a nation’s collective sense of who they are, and relevant for this research, just as nationalism can be responsible for filtering news out, it can also provide an effective reason for filtering it in, making the media a powerful reflection of the nation and nationalism.<sup>100</sup>

The intention of this study is to examine the ways in which media messages were disseminated to society to reflect the positive benefits of funding placed into high performance sport, particularly the ability of high performance sport to foster and maintain national unity. Therefore, the concept of hegemony can help us understand the dynamics of coercion and consent at play as the federal government, in particular, perpetuates its ideals through the media.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations for this study include first and foremost the time period selected for research, 1988-2010. This time frame was selected because, in 1988, when Canada played host to the Winter Olympics, we see the early stages of the creation of a form of Canadian nationalism centred on winter sport success, perpetuated through the Olympics. Hosting the 1988 Games gave Canada a reason to invest and place higher importance on the role of sport in creating a national identity. In the aftermath of the 1988 Games, Canada began to reconstruct its high performance system and 22 years later saw the emergence and development of its current high performance sport system, *Own the Podium*, along with Canada's first Olympic performance under the newly developed policy, can be noted.

### **Limitations**

The first limitation for this study is that, as Canada is a bilingual nation, a language barrier exists on part of the author, excluding an investigation of the reaction and opinions of French-Canadian newspaper articles. In addition, as will any study

involving newspaper analysis, it is beyond the scope of the study to access and analyze every newspaper article written in regards to the Canadian Sport Policy development and implementation, therefore, articles have been selected from three newspapers insofar as they offer differing perspectives. Once themes and messages from articles began to overlap, sampling was completed.

### **Chapter Outline**

Chapter One provides an outline of the structure of research. This includes a brief analysis of the literature, research methods, and methodologies that will aid in data collection and presentation. Chapter Two analyzes the 1988 Olympic Games and the early stages of the creation of winter sport nationalism in Canada and how hosting the Games and the creation of spectacle contributed to this intent. Chapter Three presents an era of policy development in Canada, once the foundation and legacy of winter sport supremacy was created in 1988, the Canadian government followed with a generation, from the 1992 to 1998 Games, of policy development intended to provide athletes and the sport system with the guidelines necessary to ensure future success. Chapter Four examines how *OTP*, Canada's current high performance sport system was introduced and represented by Canadian newspapers and what sort of narratives were crafted around the program. Once the groundwork was laid in the 15 years prior, the new millennium, 2002 and 2006 Games provided an opportunity to present a new high performance sport policy to Canadians, serving as an antecedent to when the Games would return to Canada in 2010. Finally, Chapter Five analyzes the first year of implementation of the *Own the Podium* program and the performances of Canadian



athletes. This chapter overviews the processes and events that led to the development of the current winter sport nationalism that exists in Canada, and how 2010 served to punctuate the invocation of a new national identity, based on an accelerated sense of international competitiveness manifested through its sport policy.

### **Endnotes**

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- <sup>29</sup>Jean Harvey, *The Role of Sport and Recreation Policy in Fostering Citizenship*, 30.
- <sup>30</sup>"Spheres of Influence" last modified 2016 [Accessed: December 2014] <http://ownthepodium.org/About-OTP/Spheres-of-Influence.aspx>
- <sup>31</sup>"Vision, Mission, Mandate, and Goals" last modified 2016 [Accessed: May 2016] <http://ownthepodium.org/About-OTP/Vision,-Mission,-Mandate-and-Goals.aspx>
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- <sup>33</sup>"About OTP: Own the Podium Today" last modified 2014. [Accessed: December 2014] <http://ownthepodium.org/About-OTP.aspx>
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## **CHAPTER TWO – The Creation of Spectacle**

The purpose of the next four chapters is to analyze newspaper narratives of developments in Canadian nationalism over the course of two decades of Olympic Games. This chapter focuses on the Calgary Games of 1988 when Canada played host to the Olympics for the second time. After failing to win a gold medal on home soil in Montreal in 1976 and incurring significant long term debt for the nation, Calgary was viewed by Olympic boosters as an opportunity for Olympic revival. The Canadian government and Olympic Organizing Committee of course promoted the Games as a spectacle event of global significance to garner support for investment in these and future Olympics. It was during the 1988 Calgary Olympics that the notion of spectacle created through sport as a tool to further promote nationalism became highly apparent.

The purpose of creating a unified version of Canadian nationalism was, for the COA and Sport Canada, to create a justification for the need for more funding. It was for this reason that the Olympics were framed for the government and the population as a means of celebrating ‘Canadianness.’ With a more succinct agenda and understanding of the role of the Olympics on the part of the government and Canadians, it may be easier for the COA and Sport Canada to enact policy changes. Due to its symbolic dimension, i.e. the meanings that it signifies to both participants and spectators, sport has become a form of culture.<sup>1</sup> By articulating this traditional national culture with the culture of the people (i.e. national identity), new forms of common sense can be created.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, as culture or nationalism become ideologies, they are reinforced through

meaning and language created by the dominant classes, who might then use them to galvanize populations and, in a political sense, to carry out government business.

The role of the Canadian government and the Olympic Organizing Committee was to identify historical Canadian nationalism and reinvent the definition of being Canadian to place higher importance on winter sport success, in order to successfully garner support for this spectacle. It is here that the media plays a fundamental role in the reproduction of hegemony, as dominant groups rely heavily on the media, in this case newspapers, to relay messages to Canadians. Additionally, hegemony theoretically works to counter any threats to its coherence, making it difficult to challenge the messages that are being sent to the public. This means that alternative meanings about the Games and what they represent can be met with criticism and quickly rejected or recast, as we will see demonstrated in the early stages of the Games. This chapter presents clear evidence of the role of the media in representing Canadian nationalism hegemonically so as to create strong support for the Canadian government and Canadian Olympic Organizing Committee's version of the spectacle of the Olympic Games. Further, this chapter demonstrates how, when the spectacle is sold in the right way, poor performances can actually serve as catalysts to promote future funding.

### **Recreating Canadian Nationalism**

For two weeks in February 1988, hopeful Canadians watched as their athletes participated in the Winter Olympics in Calgary. At this time, Canadian Olympic athletes were largely funded by the government's *Best Ever '88* program. Having been selected to play host for the Winter Games for the first time in Olympic history, expectations and

feelings of anticipation reverberated through the entire nation. Of course there were expectations for the performances of Canadian athletes. Consequently, millions of dollars were invested in new sporting facilities so the world could see that, when it came to winter, Canadians were, as one article stated, “*Legends made of ice and snow.*”<sup>3</sup>

Newspaper articles in the two weeks prior to the Games reflected high expectations and positive, hopeful attitudes on the part of Canadians and reporters. Newspapers devoted entire sections to the biographies of specific athletes, highlighting their struggles and strengths, and why these athletes were expected to win medals at the Games. Additionally, the media endeavoured to create nationalist sentiment or national pride through advertisements and commercials as well. The effectiveness of this was demonstrated particularly well in an article written by Canadian Stan Laugher from St. Catharines, to the editorial section of the *Toronto Star* that was titled, “Tracy inspires pride in Canada.” The article read, “I have never seen Canadianism illustrated more clearly than by figure skater Tracy Wilson, who, in a commercial says, “We’ll be skating for Canada.” It made me realize who I am. I am Canadian. Canadianism is our cultural inheritance...that’s why win, lose or draw, the Toronto Maple Leafs and Montreal Canadians are so popular, they’re living, breathing proof that there is Canada, Canadianism, and a person called a Canadian.”<sup>4</sup> The interesting factor here is that, when athletes are asked to appear in commercials to endorse certain products, their lines are written by a team of media experts to precisely play on the emotions and interests of the anticipated audience, to sell a product, in this case the Olympics.

While constructing this nationalism, consider momentarily the hegemonic process of having the performance of an individual athlete dedicated to an entire nation

and the influence of language in such a statement. According to Gramsci's "national popular," this is one way in which the traditional national culture is controlled by the state, and articulated in a way that reverberates with the aspirations of the people, playing on the emotions of the nation to highlight the positives of high performance sport, and to justify investment in it.

The media, lending further evidence to hegemonic social processes, continued to play on the hopes and memories of Canadians to create a national fervour leading up to the Games, tying together past and present athletes with pictures of past victorious Olympians and their championship teams. The organizers even inserted reference to Canada's sporting future into the ceremonies, having 12-year old Robin Perry, potential star for the 1992 Olympics, carry the flame into the Olympic stadium.

In 1988, the media predicted, as was headlined, the "Best Ever Winter Olympics;" it was with no coincidence that this matched the name of the funding program in Canada.<sup>5</sup> The Queen's representative Governor General Jeanne Sauve commented that the Games were, "one of the few moments in Canada's history when 'pride and enthusiasm' is felt by all Canadians. These will be days to remember. They will be carved in the collective soul and memories of Canadians forever."<sup>6</sup> Gellner states that "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness, but rather it invents nations where they do not exist."<sup>7</sup> Over time, society creates a heritage from symbols, values, and most importantly in this case, memories that have been previously encoded in history. Having common references and forms of identity foster a sense of solidarity that characterizes the nation, thus creating a sense of uniqueness that contributes to its nationalism. A widespread encouragement of the requisite common

sense thinking buttressed the multi-levelled government investment in elite sport, influenced by the material structure of ideology, i.e. everything that has the potential to influence public opinion, in this case evident in the media's reading of the Olympic Games.<sup>8</sup>

### **Challenges to Hegemony**

As discussed, in the creation of hegemony, the role of those in dominant positions is to eliminate any threat to the cohesion of power. As sport provides a site for the construction and propagation of hegemony, it is on this cultural terrain where one can witness a struggle over the meaning of sport and where sport can be used as a tool for negotiation. However, individuals do not negotiate from areas of equal power and, in these instances, concessions are made when necessary to limit the threat of alternatives to the hegemony created by the dominant class. This was the case in Calgary when a scandal threatened to become the face of the '88 Games involving the Lubicon First Nation. The article in the *Toronto Star* was titled, "*An Olympic shame,*" and described the Lubicon's 40-year wait for land, claims settlement, and illustrated their poverty, sickness, and despair as they waited patiently for acres of land that were promised to them, in a nation that claimed to value compassion, justice, and human rights.<sup>9</sup> The Lubicon claimed their land had been stolen, and the resources awarded to large corporations.<sup>10</sup> This article placed a political tone on the Calgary Games, "*when the Olympics begin on February 12 they'll have a chance to parade their shame before Olympic television cameras,*" and this was exactly what they had planned to do, "*what choice do they have? In a sense, politicians like Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and*



*Alberta Premier Don Getty also plan to use the Calgary Games for their own purposes, having pumped hundreds of millions of taxpayer's dollars into them.*"<sup>11</sup> In the end, the Lubicon made a loud, but peaceful demonstration at the opening ceremonies of the Calgary Games, though they kept the issue alive throughout, handing out place-cards reading "Oh Canada, our home ON native land. People say sport and politics don't mix, but they're forgetting what the Olympic spirit is all about," said Lubicon chief Bernard Ominayak. The protests were not aimed at the Olympics or the 'spirit of the relay,' but were, "a method of shedding light on this outrageous attempts to stamp out a community."<sup>12</sup> Immediately following the Games, the Lubicon were offered interim land settlements and they accepted with the promise of future negotiations. At this time, they received 66 square kilometres when they were originally seeking 230. This is what Gruneau refers to as a strategically manipulated concession.<sup>13</sup> The Lubicons were only given a brief mention again at the end of the Games that stated how the scandal had not affected the Games. By the date of publication, this land dispute remains unresolved.

The second scandal of the Games arose in the form of separate cases of potential criminal activity surrounding ticket purchases and housing for spectators. Only 10% of tickets were sold internationally, and the 10% that were promised to dignitaries and officials became 25% (50% of which were for prime events), while the "leftovers" were given to the outside community. Similarly, wait lists were scrapped as people were forced to line up at wickets that were set up in order to buy tickets. As a result, Calgarians were the only ones with access to primetime tickets and ended up comprising 45% of the spectators at the Games.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, only a month after ticket sales began, the organizing committee's ticket manager, Jim McGregor, was charged with theft,

fraud, and mischief in connection with irregularities in ticket order forms that had been sent to American buyers. The doctored official Olympic order forms sent payments directly to McGregor's company, World Tickets Inc., in U.S. dollars, rather than to the Olympic Organizers.<sup>15</sup> When the housing concern was presented, it was the second time that the police became involved with investigations of potential illegal action surrounding the Calgary Games. It appeared as though the World Marketing Agency double booked rooms and held rooms without deposits even though others had made full payments for the rooms.<sup>16</sup> On February 9, the *Toronto Star* reported Richard Allen, the company's local representative missing.<sup>17</sup> The scandal that may have left "*hundreds of spectators stranded without rooms*" was also never mentioned again.

The point of interest for these scandals is how quickly the issues became non-existent in the media once the Games in Calgary started. Canadians were forced to do their own research as to whether the Lubicon received the land promised to them, and no spectators came forth complaining about sleeping outside. So how did these issues dissolve from the public interest and what became of the media emphasis, albeit limited, to any alternative meanings for, or problematization of the Games? As was the case, historically, the media, *en masse* chose to print material related specifically to the performance aspect of the spectacle. The Olympic spectacle drew all attention to venues and athletic performance, particularly the performance of Canadians. *Best Ever* was both a government funding paradigm and the foundational distinction that Olympic organizers coveted from the IOC. Since access to Olympic stories and venues depended upon restricted access to facilities and athletes, these factors were not lost upon members of the press. Seven years of social, political, and economic concerns raised by

the press in the lead-up to every Games were soon discarded for a focus on the spectacle that played out over sixteen days. Historical precedent demonstrated that discrimination, political controversy, even death, leading up to the Games had to be pushed aside to ensure what the spectacle demanded – unequivocal attention to the business at hand. One journalist remarked: “whatever is said [about the Calgary Games] we know that beyond the fretful jealousies, the scandals and obscene spending, the Games are about us at our best, about dreams and dedication we wish we ourselves could live out, for the first time the Winter Olympics are in Canada...there will be cynicism, but there will be exhilaration too. The beautiful madness.”<sup>18</sup> For two weeks, eyes turned to competition and competitive context and what that would mean for Canada.

On February 13, 1988, after more than 20 years and 4 attempts to host, the XV Olympic Games officially began and front page newspapers headlined, “Olympic Fever: Calgary savours the magic moment ‘and all of Canada lights up with pride.’”<sup>19</sup> Newspaper articles across Canada raved about the opening ceremony, described as an opening “worthy of what many are already saying will be the best-ever Games. 60,000 fans spilled affection down on what should be the strongest team Canada ever has had.”<sup>20</sup> Prime Minister Brian Mulroney stated, “the ceremony will live forever in the memories of Canadians. I have never seen a ceremony more moving or more impressive than the one we saw here. Today, the world saw the faces of our people.”<sup>21</sup> “Let the Games begin Canada.”<sup>22</sup> With the commencement of the Games vanished the doubts that Calgary could pull it off and forgotten were the controversies surrounding tickets and land disputes.

### **Allocation of Funds in Promoting Canadian Identity**

For the next 16 days, the media focused mainly on the competitions and little else, again playing strongly on the emotions of spectators and the pride that Canadian athletes instilled in fans and spectators. However, as Canadian athletes began to fall short of expectations, the tone changed as papers had few alternatives but to label the Games, and the performances of their athletes as no more than “disappointments.” Blame was distributed where possible, excuses were frequent, and reports became monotonous. However, at the core of the problem was one very simple repetitive theme - money. Had the appropriate amount of funding been available and had it been distributed in the best way possible? Were the coaches qualified and do they know how to properly train individual athletes? What would the future look like for the new multi-million dollar facilities that were built in Calgary? Having the power to manipulate these concerns for their own purposes, sport leaders ensured that these issues proved paramount for the future of the Canadian sport system.

The amount of money invested in Calgary for the 1988 Games was, indeed, extravagant. However, expectations were that the Olympics would generate quite a bit more profit, and that the economy would be stimulated to a greater degree as a direct result of the Games. Further, in the long term, Calgary would benefit economically from the development of winter sport programs and facilities, as reflected in a February 8<sup>th</sup> headline in the *Toronto Star*, “Olympics mean gold for Calgary’s economy.”<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, the argument for spending was that Canada as a nation would benefit from the Games economically, but also through recognition as a winter sport powerhouse.

The contribution of hosting the spectacle and the investment in the facilities then was to a form of Canadian nationalism centred around success in winter sports.

The Games were anticipated to cushion the collapse of Calgary's oil economy and turn at least a \$36 million profit, while leaving behind "a legacy of world-class sports facilities, and the promotion of this city and Canada to television viewers that will draw visitors into the next century."<sup>24</sup> The federal government wanted the Calgary Games to be self-funded, estimating that they would further create about "\$1.3 billion worth of economic activity across Canada and a creation of 27,400 jobs (most of them temporary)."<sup>25</sup> A large part of this billion dollar activity was supposed to be generated from the \$565 million spent on other capital projects that had been largely funded by federal, provincial, and municipal tax dollars, and were not included in the Games' profit and loss figures.

As with all previous Olympic Games, the Olympic torch was lit in Greece and began its journey to Calgary, with 6,520 Canadians carrying it one mile each. Once in Canada, the route of the torch was within a two hour drive of 90% of Canadians and thousands watched as the aluminum bowl with its maple handle made its way across the country. The final cost of the torch relay was about \$45 million, including promotional and staging expenses, of which Petro Can sponsored \$5.5 million.<sup>26</sup> With this sponsorship, Petro Can's gas escalated 2% in price, averaging about \$280 million more for the company. Interestingly, with such a slight increase in gas prices, it is unlikely that Canadians noticed, raised concerns, or more importantly, were even aware of this cause of this increase in gas prices. Though this cost was not directly imposed by the government, it begs the question of how cognizant Canadians were about where and

when their tax dollars were being spent. Also, the organizers spent an additional \$4.5 million to have fireworks and laser shows every night at the Olympics, making the total almost \$50 million for this aspect of the spectacle alone, excluding the cost of opening and closing ceremonies.<sup>27</sup> \$15 million of taxpayer money went to “Anti-terrorism forces on guard,” with a plan that included placing RCMP ski squads on the hills and guard posts in various locations around the Olympic village. Of this \$15 million, \$9.5 million was budgeted by the Calgary police (\$5.7 million of which was spent during the Games) and \$5.5 million was spent federally.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the facilities built and renovated to make Calgary, as one article stated, the new “Mount Olympus 88,” carried a price tag of \$366 million, paid for through tax dollars and Games revenue, with the intention that they would form a mighty legacy for Canadian amateur sport.<sup>29</sup> By the time the Games started on February 13<sup>th</sup>, the new \$40 million speed skating facility had already seen 13 new world records set in preliminaries alone, making it a testament to the magnificent ice and likewise the new \$18 million bobsled facility could finally attract a program to Calgary, especially if Canada’s Haydenluck delivered a star performance.<sup>30</sup> However, as the Games commenced, the facilities proved to be far less suitable than originally expected, frequently delaying events due to poor location selection that was frequently prone to drastically fluctuating weather conditions.

The media came to call the Olympics “the artificial Games: handcuffing nature.”<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, organizers added 2,600 seats to the \$97.7 million Saddledome, spent \$60 million on the Olympic Park, \$25.3 million on the Nakiska site for alpine ski events (with a \$5 million snow making system so events would be held on schedule),

\$40 million on the Olympic Oval to have controlled ice temperatures, and the \$15.4 million Nordic Centre was also serviced by artificial snow making equipment. Additionally, the Calgary Stampede McMahon Stadium was fitted with \$15.7 million worth of improvements for opening and closing ceremonies. The Olympic Oval itself was particularly special. The *Vancouver Sun* described the Oval as a gold medal tribute to “man’s eternal determination to improve nature.”<sup>32</sup> The Oval was approximately the size of two football fields, with controlled indoor conditions, eliminating the impact of wind resistance, and at an elevation of 3,691 metres above sea level. “I think this place makes the rest of the world jealous,” said speed skater Thibault.<sup>33</sup>

However, even with additional investments to control conditions at almost the entire venue, the Games schedule was rearranged due to weather conditions. The *Montreal Gazette* critiqued that a “gold medal for short sighted thinking has to go to the organizers for selecting Mount Allan,”<sup>34</sup> since the chosen venues created additional problems for scheduling and accessibility. Federal Olympic Coordinator Gerry Berger commented, “I knew the bad weather couldn’t last. These were record winds. We had a 16 day schedule and scheduled events that could be affected so they could be moved.” Ralph Klein avoided the question of the selection of Mount Allan but added that, “you can always say if I woulda if I coulda...we’ll have to look at those facilities to find out where improvements can be made. It’s important that we get to the point where they pay for themselves.”<sup>35</sup>

The facilities for drug testing added an additional \$1.5 million expense to the budget for the Games. Foothills Hospital laboratory was fitted with advanced equipment for drug testing and guarded twenty-four hours a day.<sup>36</sup> Also, at a significant but

necessary \$1.9 million the lab ran about 500 tests on medalists and randomly selected athletes, screening for in excess of 200 substances.<sup>37</sup>

The basic Sport Canada budget since 1985 had been \$55 million a year for both the 1988 Summer and Winter Olympics, which included, an annual expenditure of \$9 million for the sports administrative centre in Ottawa, \$5 million for the athlete assistance program, and \$3.5 million for other major projects such as the Canada Games. The Best Ever program provided an additional \$25 million over five years, a substantial amount of which was allocated to development programs for sports with minimal presence in Canada (for example, luge). The concern here was that, for a nation of about 25 million people, this was a considerable amount of money in a time when, justifiably, one could have argued for more pressing needs such as affordable housing.<sup>38</sup>

This section reflects on state funding for the 1988 Calgary Games, the decisions which directly influenced the direction and role of non-professional sport in Canada. For Gruneau, power is like a resource, a commodity in the system, and the state is the mediating central bank within which the circulation and exchange of power proceeds, and in capitalist societies, such as Canada, this power belongs to the state.<sup>39</sup> For Canada, from a hegemonic perspective, current trends in high performance sport place pressure on the Canadian government to legitimate itself to capital and to align social provisions with the accumulation of capital since it has the power to distribute public money.<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, the construction of new sites and the spectacle of the Games led to money accrued solely for the benefit of the government. The point is that Canadians were seemingly unaware of this because, though the media reported the incredible costs that were met to create the spectacle of the Winter Games in Calgary, they also worked to



justify this spending. This was done by the media through reverting consumer attention toward key aspects of investment, the benefits of which would contribute to the promotion of Canada as a nation, for example tourist attractions, economic gain, future sporting facilities, and improved athlete performance, and allowing these factors to overshadow potential current issues that may be facing Canadians, such as affordable housing. Utilizing media, the Canadian government in 1988 planted the seed for the development of Canada as a winter sport nation since the media focused mainly on the construction and improvement of winter sport facilities for future generations of athletes and Games, rather than on the costs of these ventures. Ultimately, what was promoted and reported was that future winter athletes would have optimal opportunities and means to train and continue to create a Canadian nationalism promoted and strengthened through success at Winter Olympics.

### **“Winter Sport” Nationalism and Canadian Performances**

In order for this winter-sport nationalism to continue to flourish, Canadian athletes would have to perform at elite levels with regular podium performances. However, as was evident in the early stages of the Games, athletes fell short of expectations in Calgary. Consequently, as the roots for Canadian nationalism and winter sports were already strong, thanks in large part to hosting the spectacle, the Canadian government would be able to shed positive light on performances, and garner continued support in the future.

Despite funding and facilities, the final results for Canadian athletes in Calgary were somewhat unremarkable. In total, Canada only managed to win five medals, the

first of which didn't come until February 20<sup>th</sup>, one week into the Games, and none of which were gold, placing the country 13<sup>th</sup> overall in the medal count. Article after article commented on the embarrassment of less than stellar Canadian performances at the Games, "Record skate not good enough for Thibault,"<sup>41</sup> "Canadian skiers struggle to explain poor showing in biggest race; blew chance for home advantage,"<sup>42</sup> and "Orser magnificent – but still a loser,"<sup>43</sup> suggesting that the results were disappointing nationwide.

As mentioned, failure makes the future promising. For Sport Canada, the results were precisely the ideal stepping stone for the future of Canadian sport as athletes had demonstrated improvement over past competitions. For example, though Thibault's skate may not have been good enough to place him on the podium, the article went on to state that, "the federal government pumped in an additional \$30 million to boost the Canadian performances at the XV Winter Olympic Games and, if you look beyond medals, it paid off in the 500-metre final at the \$40 million dollar Olympic Oval....it was our Best Ever effort in speed skating."<sup>44</sup> Also, with continued support for athletes from Sport Canada, coaches were convinced that over time, Canada would see the results it anticipated, "Keep digging" Canadian ski coach Marty Hall urged;

Nothing comes easy in this league. It's a matter of building a base and then keep digging and digging until you strike gold. That's going to take money and commitment from Sport Canada. We have that from (federal) Sports Minister Otto Jelinek. And I'll tell you something else: We couldn't have a better guy in the job right now than Otto. He knows what it take to be successful at this level. Jelinek took the time to meet with us personally and we have strong indications that we will continue to receive solid financial support from Sport Canada. Without that funding our programs would come to a full stop. It's vital at this stage to know we can continue to go forward. We have the programs and the money; now we need the numbers. It's up to us to go out and sell our sport.<sup>45</sup>

However, though Jelinek seemed quite positive about the future of Canadian sport, he had stated that participation would be a major factor in future funding. In 1988, Cross Country Canada had \$1.65 million budget with more than \$1 million coming from the federal government and against these numbers the performances of Canadians appeared unimpressive.<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, Sport Canada was, reportedly, not concerned with the results of Canadian athletes. Canadian Olympic Association spokesperson Jack Lynch commented that, “people shouldn’t be going out predicting gold medals for Canada from here on in. A realist saw four medals for Canada and the team is on schedule for this expectation.”<sup>47</sup> Director of Sport Canada, Abby Hoffman, claimed that:

The Winter Olympics should put to rest the “destructive” theory that we are a nation of losers. Despite some losses Canada has already surpassed its goals here. If you take the medals our athletes have won to date and divided that number into the total cost, you’d say we didn’t get our money’s worth in Calgary. Medals count, sure, but if you use medals as the only yardstick to measure Canada’s performance, you’re going to get a really skewered perspective. In reality, Canada is still a second-tier nation in the Winter Olympics. Keeping that in mind, our progress in Calgary has been exceptional and the money was well spent. At the Winter Games in Sarajevo four years ago, we placed ten athletes in the top eight in four sports. In Calgary we’ve had 17 athletes in the top eight in six sports. You’re certainly not a loser in world class competition when you finish in the top eight. We’ve improved a helluva lot over our entire past history of Winter Olympics and I see a fighting spirit here that wasn’t apparent in previous Games.<sup>48</sup>

Though many questioned the meagre medal collection, Hoffman continued to endorse the Canadian system for recruiting and training its Olympic athletes as, in comparison to East Bloc nations that recruited athletes in grade school and trained them for the sports where they had the highest likelihood of achieving Olympic success,

Canadians didn't limit the freedom of their youngsters.<sup>49</sup> One critique was that, for Canada to follow a similar approach would require massive funding from the government and, instead, Canadian parents were expected to strain their personal, financial, resources to provide the coaching and training necessary to bring their children to the level where government dollars would take over. But Hoffman suggested that identifying the country's best medal prospects and directing funding to elite athletes with better medal results would be a "short-sighted and unacceptable approach to high performance sports."<sup>50</sup> The article concluded by stating that "Canadians can't have it both ways, either we make a total commitment or we accept the fact that our system will produce a certain number of outstanding athletes, but never as many as East Bloc countries." The obvious difference in performance between Canada and East Bloc nations was apparent. Fort Branch Legion 264 former Sergeant Major George Clarke said, "We're doing our best under the circumstances. But the lack of training is really showing. The Europeans are doing well because they are better trained. But all of these new facilities we've built for these Games should help us in the future."<sup>51</sup> However, there is no escaping the incredible cost to taxpayers of sending 117 Olympians to compete in Calgary, with few podium victories to show for it.

Minister of Sport Otto Jelinek redirected blame away from *Best Ever* to the provincial level, the school system, and the attitudes of athletes:

Physical education in our schools is a disgrace to Canada. There's no lack of motivation among our Olympians, but I feel too many of our younger athletes are being spoon-fed. Some athletes expect everyone to do everything for them while they're not willing to make the personal commitment it takes to be champions. It's an attitude that really annoys me. In the past athletes had to take some initiative. It's a fine balancing act between government funding and still leaving room for athletes to make a personal contribution, show the discipline

required to succeed and be self-motivated. When my sister and I represented Canada, my parents paid for everything, the travel expenses, ice time, everything. I'm not saying we should go back to that system, which caused financial hardships for many families, but I do think young athletes should realize there's no free ride. They have to be willing to make personal sacrifices too.<sup>52</sup>

Again, since 1985, the minister of Fitness and Amateur sport noted \$55 million a year spent on the Winter and Summer Olympic Games program with an additional \$25 million for the Best Ever program aimed at top performances in Calgary. Jelinek went on to state that, "It is unbelievable that physical education is not compulsory through grade school and into high school. It has been shown that the fitness of Canadians starts to deteriorate when they reach their early teens."<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, physical education teachers have used this argument in the past, but nothing has ever been done about it at the decision making level.<sup>54</sup> However, "[e]very time someone sees something wrong in society they blame the education system. Every group who wants something done turns to the schools and we just don't have the facilities or the manpower to please everyone," countered Ann Vanstone, chairperson of the Metro Toronto Board of Education. "An improved physical education program would depend "totally" on massive funding increases for new facilities and instructor training," added Caroline Digiovanni chairperson of Metro Special School Board. Abby Hoffman commentated that, "European coaches have been hired who simply cannot believe the lack of discipline and commitment among a number of their athletes, although they are being funded by Sport Canada. Like Mr. Jelinek, I'm very disappointed in the attitude of these athletes, but it is up to the sport governing bodies to identify such athletes and take appropriate action."<sup>55</sup> Evidently, in cases where the sport system failed to fulfill the needs of the state, blame was directed to the athletes for not producing. This raised the question of

athlete accountability in the Canadian sport system, which eventually became policy focus for the future.

### **The Future of “Best Ever”**

Best Ever was largely called into question following the Calgary Games, raising the issue of whether funding would be made available for the program to develop athletes for the 1992 Games. If not, the funds already poured into Best Ever would have been wasted. Media messages to the Canadian public were saturated with the idea that if Canada wanted results, long-term funding would be a necessity.<sup>56</sup>

After the Games, a rift between Sport Canada and the COA surfaced. While Sport Canada wanted to move away from athletic elitism, directing more funds to grass-roots programs, the COA directed its efforts toward quality rather than quantity. When the XV Winter Games came to an end, both parties claimed a “Best Ever” performance for Canada (5 medals and 19 top eight finishes). With this said, Jack Lynch of the COA stated that the future of Canada in Olympic Games wouldn’t be this easy and that Sport Canada was working on emotions when it claimed that five medals and 19 top finishes would result in eight or nine medals and 25-30 top finishes in 1992. He argued that the key to the future of outstanding performances was to examine the performance of developing athletes who would reach their prime medal potential in four years.<sup>57</sup>

In the near future, Minister Jelinek was expected to present a reduced budget for cabinet approval and reiterated that it would cut back on sports lacking mass participation – certain sports (including bobsled, luge, ski jump, biathlon, and cross country skiing), did not have the total number of athletes to warrant the support they had

received for 1988. Abby Hoffman added that money directed to sending athletes from these sports to World Cup events in Europe could be put to better use building stronger bases in Canada. Jelinek also commented that, performances were not as important and that federal government funding for amateur sports would be less dependent on Canada's showing, than it would be on participation, stating that "there has been speculation that there will be a decrease in federal funding after these Games but I can tell you now future funding will not be tied to our Olympic results."<sup>58</sup>

On February 25, 1988, Jelinek promised a dramatic overhaul of Canadian athlete funding, steering away from dedicating almost all of its amateur sports funding (\$50 million annually) to a few gifted athletes and, instead, designing a new program aimed at getting as many youngsters in to as many sports as possible. This meant federal funds would be spent on coaching facilities and national development programs and the COA would be expected to distribute some of the money it earned into sports programming, particularly for high performance athletes subsidized by Ottawa.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, Jelinek vowed to make high-school physical education courses compulsory. Hoffman added that studies would be conducted for particular sports to assess whether or not they had enough competitors to qualify for funding, meaning, programs with no grassroots sports would receive no Olympic funding.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, the success and future of Best Ever, specifically as Canada's high performance sport funding program, as well as the importance placed on performances were largely dependent upon: 1) whether the Mulroney government remained in office and 2) whether or not Sport Canada's emphasis on participation and the COA's emphasis on medal potential athletes could become Canada's combined objective going forward.

***The Legacy of the Spectacle in Contributing to Winter Sport Nationalism***

It was all optimism in Calgary prior to the start of the Games. Although 380,000 tickets were still unsold, a record 1.5 million had already been sold. Calgary Mayor Ralph Klein stated that the Olympics would leave the city with a new industry, and Calgary would become a world sports centre.<sup>61</sup> However, the media commented that what would be needed to make these Games a glorious happening and not just another overblown sporting event, was Canadian medal winners, preferably of a golden hue, “Canada was the first host nation not to win a gold medal in Montreal and a repeat of that would be humiliating.”<sup>62</sup> That gold medal never came. And yet, though the Games proved disappointing for Canada in regards to medal count, and the major concern for Canadians was the lack of results by the home team’s athletes, Calgary did set a new standard for the Games. Most impressively, for the first time in Winter Olympic history, the spiralling costs and huge deficits that had been the legacy of almost all prior Games before did not significantly affect these Games, nor did political boycotts and terrorism. All in all, the Games were a commercial success as Calgary’s Tourist and Convention Bureau estimates the Games attracted more than 250,000 guests who spent up to \$50 million.

While the Olympic Games were widely labelled a success, many opposed both the large amount of public money that was being spent while social spending was being cut and the authoritarian ways in which the Olympic Organizing Committee avoided subjects of debate (particularly in regards to the selection of facility location, which ultimately proved to be a costly decision).<sup>63</sup> Additionally, studies have shown that very



few small businesses considered the Olympics to have led to opportunities for their business in the long-run, while other studies found that the impact of the Olympics on awareness of Calgary as a tourist destination diminished within a few years of the Games, demonstrating that the hosting of the Games did not necessarily lead to sustained economic growth.<sup>64</sup>

In short, total funding for the Games was above what anyone had seen to date and yet, there were few who protested the amounts of money invested into them because the government, through the messages propagated through the media, had naturalized this investment. In terms of nationalism, the sport spectacle created at the 1988 Olympic Games provided a common reference point for all Canadians, building the notion of imagined communities as discussed earlier. Imagined communities create solitary bonds between members of a nation, even though they may never meet one another, through the emotional ties created by events such as supporting the same Olympic team. In 1988, the organizing committee played on the historical nostalgia necessary for creating this bond through the torch relay, opening ceremonies, and the overall spectacle of the Games, while the media helped to relay the message of common references to a broader population. In this sense, the Calgary Games were in fact a huge success. The nationalism the government hoped to generate was clearly evident. Canadians were encouraged to believe the investment in the Games was necessary, as they contributed to Canada's identity as a winter sport nation. In the end, performances were justified through Sport Canada stating that this was precisely what was expected, and if the Canadian team was to continue to get better and to be a central component of Canadian national identity, long term investment was needed. In the case of Calgary 1988, 'losing'

simply justified spending more money. Conclusively, not only was the generation of this spectacle met with praise by the media, but the government and organizing committee generated support for increased funding in the future.

The subsequent year, in 1989, the Mulroney government was re-elected. After having displayed what he, and many others, frequently described as the “Best Ever” Games, it is likely that this became a strong part of his platform. In the end, the media, through the influence and comments made by organizing officials, Games officials, sports ministers, and members of the federal government, constructed a version of Canadian nationalism that, at this point, was not so concerned with winning medals, but took pride in their successful staging of Olympic Games and playing host to show the rest of the world what Canada can contribute to the winter sport environment. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the *Vancouver Sun* wrote, “Olympic Success is all in the way you count it. Counting only medals is too mean-spirited, too tough on our athletes, too...un-Canadian!”<sup>65</sup> Otto Jelinek stated that this had been Canada’s best ever finish and that in the future, Canada would eventually join the winter sporting elite, which would likely be attributed to the facilities built in Calgary,<sup>66</sup> the expectation was that top eight finishes would translate to top five by the following year, and top three in subsequent years. Supporting this narrative, the media had already played its role in ensuring that Canadians were aware that, due to the facilities, performances by athletes would gradually improve. On February 28, the *Montreal Gazette* applauded Canadian efforts,

Take a bow Calgary you did yourself proud, take a bow Canadian athletes, you did us all proud. The Games were a success on every count, we showed the world a city with spectacular scenery, impressive know-how and distinct flavour and friendliness. Canada was not a big medal winner but the Games are about more than medals, they bested their personal best, stretched themselves to new

limits, and showed they are contenders in the highest levels of international competitions. Their performance should be an inspiration to young Canadians dreaming of excellence in winter sports – from one Canadian city to another, well done Calgary.<sup>67</sup>

This ultimately lends support to the way in which nostalgia and a sense of community can be positioned, through media narratives, to garner support for investment in future Games. The 1988 legacy of Olympic spectacle contributed directly to the hegemonic function of sport for those in positions of power, influencing the populace into supporting their ideals. The final message of the Games was clear in this sense, successfully persuading the nation that decisions were being made in their best interests and for the long-term benefit of the nation.

However, though it appeared as though the majority of Canadians were in support of the expenditures of the 1988 Calgary Games, future Olympic spectacles would not be as easy to sell, as Canada would not be playing host again in the foreseeable future. Therefore, in order to secure future support, Sport Canada, the COA, and the federal government would have to approach future Games with caution, as the medal count would likely become increasingly important when it was not overshadowed by the spectacle of hosting.

Matti Goksoyr determined various factors that needed to be fulfilled in order for a link to be created between sport and nationalism for a given nation. One of these factors in identifying sport as intrinsic to the values and identity of a nation is on the basis of how well that nation performs in the sport during international competition and whether the nation has received international merit in that sport(s).<sup>68</sup> Ultimately, since the performances of athletes in 1988 were at best mediocre, in order for a winter-sport nationalism to thrive in Canada, the power groups, i.e. the government, COA and Sport

Canada, would have to revert more attention toward the Canadian sport program itself, in order to ensure athlete success and to continue to build on the nationalism generated in Calgary. Due to lack of performances, 1988 left Canada with evidence that changes in the system might be necessary, and although we see the beginnings of this at the end of the decade, the lack of measurable success in Calgary provided an opportunity for an era of policy development through the 1990s.

### **Summary**

With respect to emergent themes analyzed throughout this dissertation, the legacy of the 1988 Games rested in the facilities that were constructed in order to host the Olympics. These facilities continued to create changes in Canada's sport system over the next two decades as they would be accessible to generations of athletes for training for future Games. With respect to funding and support, the money invested to host the Calgary Games was the highest Canada had seen to date and there is some evidence to suggest that this resulted in an increase, albeit temporary, in tourism and the city's construction and hospitality sectors of the economy. For nationalism, this era and the spectacle surrounding the hosting of the Games created the foundation for the development of a national pride through its organization and extravagant representation of feelings of "Canadianness" that linked national identity to winter sport. Finally, the fourth and final theme, challenges faced by Canada at the Olympics, was evident in 1988 with the events that threatened to characterize the Games at its early stages. However, thanks in large part to the orchestration of spectacle that overpowered these concerns, the media were quickly able to overshadow these challenges in favour of the positive effects of hosting the Winter Games.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>3</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 08, 1988, C2.
- <sup>4</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 06, 1988, Editorials.
- <sup>5</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 04, 1988, CC.
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- <sup>7</sup>Ernest Gellner. *Nations and nationalism*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983): 186.
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- <sup>9</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 01, 1988, A12.
- <sup>10</sup>*Montreal Gazette* (Montreal), February 13, 1988, A1.
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- <sup>13</sup>Morgan. "Hegemony Theory, Social Domination, and Sport," 313.
- <sup>14</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 03, 1988, D5.
- <sup>15</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 07, 1988, A1.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, A1.
- <sup>17</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 09, 1988, E4.
- <sup>18</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 08, 1988, C1.
- <sup>19</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 13, 1988, A1.
- <sup>20</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 14, 1988, A1.
- <sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, A1.
- <sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, A1.
- <sup>23</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 08, 1988, C20.
- <sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, C20.
- <sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, C20.
- <sup>26</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 12, 1988, A16.
- <sup>27</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 27, 1988, A8.
- <sup>28</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 08, 1988, C10.
- <sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, C13.
- <sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, C18.
- <sup>31</sup>*Vancouver Sun* (Vancouver), February 09, 1988, F12.
- <sup>32</sup>*Vancouver Sun* (Vancouver) February 02, 1988, E1.
- <sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, E1.
- <sup>34</sup>*Montreal Gazette* (Montreal), February 28, 1988, C4.
- <sup>35</sup>*Montreal Gazette* (Montreal), March 01, 1988, B1.
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- <sup>59</sup>*Vancouver Sun* (Vancouver), February 25, 1988, D1.
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- <sup>61</sup>*Vancouver Sun* (Vancouver), February 06, 1988, G1.
- <sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, G1.
- <sup>63</sup>David Whitson. "Olympic Hosting in Canada: Promotional Ambitions, Political Challenges" in *Rethinking the Olympics, Cultural Histories of the Modern Games*, ed. Robert K. Barney (Morgantown: West Virginia University, 2010), 369.
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### **CHAPTER THREE – An Era of Accountability**

As a result of the attention and excitement generated by hosting the Calgary Olympics, the decade following was marked by significant changes in Canada's sport system. Following the perceived athletic performance shortcomings of the 1988 Calgary Games, the 1990s were characterized by extensive policy development. Sport organizations were unified around a single end goal – winning. In the wake of the 1988 Games, sport policy in Canada became a question of best approach and how to galvanize support for the increased systemic attention to Olympic-related sports, training, athletes' needs, and an accountability framework. Canadian nationalism, expressed through sport, had to be bent in this direction of course to support public funding. The potential was there in regards to talent of the athletes, the funding was available, and, thanks in large part to Calgary, the facilities for optimal training were now also available. Consequently, this suggested that the next step to success in winter sports was to frame policy development in a way that would ensure that investment was strategic and distributed. For this reason, the 1990s were an era of increased organizational capacity, and a reassessment of the positive and negative aspects of the *Best Ever* Program. New policies made sport organizations, managers, and athletes alike increasingly accountable for their performances. Policy-makers sought to improve and align the various sectors of Canada's sport system. In the 10-year period following the 1988 Calgary Games, 19 sport-related studies by the Canadian government and other organizations emerged, highlighted by the 1988 *Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System* Report, the 1990 *Commission of Inquiry into the Use of Drugs and Banned*

*Practices Intended to Increase Athletic Performance* which eventually led to the *Dubin Inquiry*, the 1995 *Sport Canada Sport Funding and Accountability Framework*, and the 1998 *Mills Report*.<sup>1</sup> Overall, policy development led to increased importance placed on the opinions and individual needs of athletes, and the distribution of responsibility for athletic performances to the various organizations directly responsible for the athletes. Similarly, though the funding available to support athletes still had its shortcomings, it was improving, and this resulted in an increased emphasis on winning. The 1990s became an era of more professionalized, comprehensive sport structures and the media became the mode of expression for the expectations of an enhanced sport system. Gold medal performances heralded the success of the new sport policies and the press aligned medal achievements with narratives of national pride. Journalists supported the new expectations of sport policy-makers by translating them to Canadian expectations. At the same time, athletic performance became more tightly woven in such narratives with national fervour.

### **Canadian Nationalism in the Aftermath of the 1980s**

Although the press characterized the Calgary Olympics as successful in many respects, the performances of Canada's elite athletes were represented as a national disappointment. Canada had four years until the next Winter Games in Albertville, France to address its Olympic performance shortcomings. Headlines prior to the 1992 Games read, "Sporting Chance - shut out of the gold in Calgary in 1988, the Canadian Olympic contingent hope – and is expected – to do better at Albertville's Winter Games. A heartwarming winter on the slopes, rinks, trails and oval tracks of North America and



Europe has made Canadians optimistic about the Albertville Olympics.”<sup>2</sup> For the press, hosting the Winter Games without gold medal performances begged the question of what precisely was Canada’s place in international winter sports. The Canadian government, the principle public funding source for the Calgary Games, took stock of the priorities in Canada’s high performance sport system.

In 1988, the government of Canada created a task force, commissioned by Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, Jean Charest. The task force report that resulted, *Toward 2000: Building Canada’s Sport System*, provided clear recommendations intended to guide Canadian national sport policy into the next millennium, which became the most achievement-oriented document for high performance sport to date.<sup>3</sup> Though the document made note that the Canadian high performance system was still in its infancy, it stated that, in order to be successful at the level of international sport, a “‘mature high performance sport system’ required professionalized coaching, improved performances by Canadian athletes, better facilities and a stronger financial commitment from the private and public sectors.” The report recommended prioritizing sports, a fully integrated system of athlete development, and promoting “the concept of sport excellence such that achievements in high performance sport will be recognized and valued by the Canadian public.”<sup>4</sup> *Toward 2000*, spoke directly in this instance to engaging the nation, linking the goals of high performance sport to Canadian spectator interests. Engagement meant promoting a cultural cohesion of shared interests, connecting international competitiveness and achievement to national sentiment.

Of interest here is the emphasis on better facilities. One can recall the millions of dollars invested into the facilities built for the Calgary Winter Games and the justification that improved facilities would lead to improved performances. The intention of the infrastructure built for the Calgary Games was that they would become world class training facilities for future generations of athletes. For Canada, this was accurate for some sports but not others. After winning gold in Nagano in 1998, speed-skater Catriona Lemay Doan related her successes directly to the Calgary facilities: “the oval (in Calgary) has helped to develop our team. It’s brought the level of skating up so high. The level of skater coming up behind us is incredible.”<sup>5</sup> But following the Calgary Games, skater Gaetan Boucher expressed concerns that other nations were catching up to Canada’s monopoly in short track speed skating and that the Albertville Games of 1992 might offer one last harvest for Olympic medals for Canada in the sport, “see, the problem is those other nations are doing a better job of development than Canada is.”<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, there were sports that suffered through the 1990s. 1992 Cross country ski coach Laurent Roux commented that, “the government doesn’t seem to believe in elite sport. They hand out money, but the athletes are still below the poverty line.”<sup>7</sup> Canada entered the 1992 Olympic Games with what was widely considered its weakest alpine entry in over 20 years, with coaches and athletes alike expressing concerns about the future of the sport in Canada. Intriguingly, former downhill coach Heinz Stohl went so far as to blame the Games in Calgary for the shortcomings of the alpine teams, “I think everybody was gearing up for Calgary. After that, I think everybody lost their motivation. The money was gone and everybody was sort of burned out.”<sup>8</sup> In agreement, in 1992, Jack Sasseville (who would eventually become the cross-

country ski coach in 1994), predicted that cross country skiing had reached a crossroads in North America, and would die out within the next decade.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, results for alpine sports gave Canadians little to be proud of and even less hope for the future. In 1992, the Canadian ski jumpers did not win any medals and tensions between coaches, players, and even the COA were evident. In the December leading up to the Games, ski jumping coach Danilo Pudgar stated that the team didn't even deserve to compete in the Olympics and the COA snubbed jumper Colin Capel for making the qualifying standards three days after the deadline.<sup>10</sup> The athletes made it clear that they felt last on the list of priorities for the Games and felt they were not getting the support they needed from either their coach or the Canadian Olympic Association: "coach hurt the program and hurt us as individuals – as for COA? An extra ski jumper isn't going to break the COA budget."<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, they were right. For the first time in 66 years, when the Olympics came to Lillehammer, Norway in 1994, Canada was not represented by a ski jumping team. After the millions of dollars spent to fund Calgary with the assurance that this would lead to long-term results, results did not follow for some sports. The press of course picked up on these tensions and played a role in questioning the strategy of the sports organizations and the federal government. In fact, one article made it clear that the COA was not to blame for the lack of representation in ski-jumping in 1994, "Don't blame the COA. Blame the officials at Ski Jumping Canada, who ignored development during the long past glory days of Horst Bulau and Steve Collins."<sup>12</sup> Policy changes required a narrative of support, the articulation of a new nationalism to shift the focus of Canadians to support the new policy changes.

### *The Dubin Inquiry*

Multi-million dollar facilities, funded primarily by federal money and performance levels that fell well short of expectations pressed the government to address the national sport system. In the years between the 1988 Calgary Games and the 1992 Albertville Games in France, Best Ever funding patterns were sustained for the most part. However, it was becoming increasingly clear, particularly as demonstrated through the *Toward 2000* task force report, that the government of Canada's emphasis on medal performances was playing a lead role in the push for policy development. In fact, later that same year, at the Summer Games in Seoul in 1988, the image of Canadian sport changed drastically on the international stage. Canadian world renowned sprinter Ben Johnson won the gold medal in the 100-metre sprint, only to be stripped of the medal after testing positive for performance-enhancing substances. The scandal raised questions about the pressure placed on athletes to win, and, for Canada, whether or not the nation had the means to support elite athletes. Following the events of the 1988 Summer Games, the Canadian government, Sport Canada, and the Canadian Track and Field Association were quick to establish inquiries and punishments for the guilty parties associated with Ben Johnson's use of performance enhancing substances. The 1990 *Dubin Inquiry*, a national apology for the scandal, criticized the policies of both the Canadian federal government and amateur sports associations. Justice Dubin asserted,

The use of banned performance-enhancing drugs is cheating, which is the antithesis of sport. The widespread use of such drugs has threatened the essential integrity of sport and is destructive of its very objectives. It also erodes the ethical and moral values of athletes who use, endangering their mental and physical welfare while demoralizing the entire sport community. I have endeavored to define the true

values of sport and restore its integrity so that it can continue to be an important part of our culture, unifying and giving pleasure to Canadians while promoting their health and vitality. I have also sought to protect and advance the interests of Canadian athletes and have endeavoured to obtain for them a healthy athletic climate in which they can compete honourably in the future, both nationally and internationally, in accordance with the true objectives of sport.<sup>13</sup>

If the lack of success by Canadian athletes at home had not already done so, the scandal threatened to weaken Canadian sporting identity even more. As a result, the aftermath of this scandal led to the first important group established in Canada to tackle drug use in sport. Described in newspapers as probably, “the most outstanding organization of its type in the world,” the newly established Canadian Anti-Doping Organization’s board of directors included former Supreme Court Justice Willard Estey, Dr. Roger Jackson, director of the Sport Medicine Centre at the University of Calgary and former head of the Canadian Olympic Association, and Dr. Margaret Somerville, director of medicine, ethics and law at McGill University. Board chairperson Andrew Pipe stated,

I think when you consider the skills and expertise and sensitivities of these individuals, one couldn’t hope for a group of more distinguished individuals. John Wooden, the great UCLA coach, used to say, ‘Be quick, but never hurry.’ We very carefully recruited the members of the board and we’re delighted they’ve all accepted. The new anti-doping organization, which has a budget of \$2 million-plus, plans to hold its first board of directors meeting in March in Ottawa.<sup>14</sup>

However, cause for concern was the placement of guilt and burden that came from the inquiry and subsequent establishment of the *Canadian Anti-Doping Organization*, later recast as the *World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)*. Former Olympian Bruce Kidd highlighted the ways in which the inquiry avoided a discussion of Canada’s collective responsibility for what happened in Seoul:

The focus on who did what and knew what in the Dubin Inquiry served to deflect attention from the extent to which Ben Johnson and the other Canadian throwers and weight-lifters who had been caught out on drug tests were products of the system we established and the messages we consistently gave them...it is not that Ben Johnson is a victim. Rather, he and his entourage, like the other Canadian athletes who have been suspended for drug offences, are products of a Canadian high-performance sport system whose discourse and reward structures are entirely oriented towards winning.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, the Canadian elite sport system was based upon financially rewarding the best athletes; those on the cusp, received less or no funding, leaving them more vulnerable to the lure of doping in a highly competitive environment. According to Macintosh and Whitson, the Ben Johnson scandal opened the eyes of Canadians to the fact that, “what is good in sport, what we enjoy about sport in our own lives and our own communities, is distorted by the clear message of ‘win or else,’” and although the inquiry created resistance to the capitalist aspects of sport by attempting to remove the narrow focus in winning, the process was still guided towards an increasingly more competitive trajectory, focusing nationalism on winning and rationalizing the whole high-performance sport system.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Canadian sport narrative gradually became so strongly saturated with messages of winning and the importance of gold medals that those athletes who were not competitive had few options apart from quitting or doping, particularly when it came to maintaining the financial support they were receiving from the federal government and private sector sponsorships. From a theoretical perspective, the Ben Johnson scandal was also an opportune moment to reinforce the need for high-performance sport funding. The hegemonic influence of high performance sport managers steered normative values towards the positive cultural benefits, indeed the national benefits, of winning on the

international stage. The Dubin Inquiry did not relieve the pressure on elite athletes. If anything, they required more support to be competitive. Olympic downhiller Podivinsky captured these pressures, stating: “as an athlete in Canada, you’re making 15 a day, (referring to the 450 monthly stipend the majority receive from the government) other than that, there’s nothing. They expect us to be great ambassadors to other countries. I mean, on 15 a day, you can’t even buy yourself clothes. Hopefully, that will improve.”<sup>17</sup> In order to stay competitive, he stated, “we will not only have to devote enormous resources to high-performance sport, resources which can only come from other areas of social expenditure. We will also need to go about the production of high-performance athletes in the ways it is done in those countries that routinely make the top eight, and we will have to subordinate many aspects of Canadian social policy and many aspects of Canadian sport culture to this purpose.”<sup>18</sup> Macintosh and Whitson wrote that Canadians were wise enough to be unwilling to pay this price in the future, and that Sport Canada and the Canadian government should instead favour a system that pays more attention to equity, personal accomplishment, and ethical issues.<sup>19</sup>

### **Inclusion and Cohesion: Necessities for Nationalism**

The three Olympic Games that preceded the new millennium lent strong support to the idea that Canada did in fact have the talent required to make an impact on the international sports scene. This again provided the federal government with a rationalization to increase funding for athletes. The impetus for these policy and spending shifts was the Dubin Inquiry, which had brought the sport system of the 1970s and 1980s “crashing down.”<sup>20</sup> The Inquiry led to policy discussions surrounding values

in the Canadian sport system, the role that the federal government should play in high performance sport, and whether a narrower focus on core sports might result in a better return on government investment while reducing public spending. In 1995, a new federal government policy was released, outlining criteria for funding eligibility.<sup>21</sup> The intention of the policy was to reduce the number of sport organizations that would receive federal funding and focus on sports determined to have the greatest value to Canadians. In 1996, the *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF)* was fully implemented whereby,

national sport (NSO) and multi-sport\service organizations (MSO) had to indicate their achievements and specific program objectives as well as how these aligned with larger social policy objectives established by government with respect to improving access and opportunity for underserved groups, an athlete-centred focus, harassment and abuse, athlete appeals, bilingual policies and anti-doping policies.<sup>22</sup>

As a result, from 1994 to *SFAF* to 1997, funding directed to NSOs and MSOs decreased by approximately \$15 million.

Understanding the *SFAF* provides important context for the introduction of the *Mills Report* of 1998. One requirement for eligibility for sport funding stated clearly that services from sport organizations were to be provided equally in both official Canadian languages, highlighting a repetitive theme from the 1992, 1994, and 1998 Winter Olympic Games -- what was the role of Quebec and French-speaking Canadians in the sport system?

The first Winter Games of this decade, Albertville, France 1992, saw a dramatic shift in the landscape of the world begging the question in Canada about its own future. On February 5, the front of the *Toronto Star* sports pages headlined, “Will Canada have Quebec at ’94 Games?”<sup>23</sup> Since 1988, when the world last gathered for the Winter



Games, Europe in particular had undergone an incredible transformation. The article argued that,

The Cold War at the cold Games is dead, and you can't tell the nations without a scorecard or a political scientist. The Soviet Union no longer exists, except on the jackets of some Russian competitors - who are wearing the old CCCP because the union didn't break up officially until Jan 1 and the rubles for the gear were already in the mail. The Russians have joined with four republics from the Commonwealth of Independent States to form the Unified Team, which probably won't even make it until the Summer Games because Ukraine is hot to strike out as a solo act. The Baltics, of course, already have. The Unified Team will march under the Olympic flag and when its athletes win gold medals, they will be serenaded by Ode to Joy by the old Russian composer, Ludwig van Beethoven. Speaking of Germany, there is only one now. The Berlin Wall sits in souvenir chunks on mantelpieces, and a nation whose vital statistics were 17 million citizens and 43 gold medals at Winter Games from 1956 to 1988 has been absorbed into what was the old world order, which shows you how confusing it can be. There are now three countries representing the one nation that was host to the Olympics before Calgary, Yugoslavia. Slovenia and Croatia have sent teams and the husk of the strife-torn country is also here. To call the XVI Olympic Winter Games is to adopt a cheerfully western pose, especially considering a Balkan civil war will be marching in the opening ceremonies Saturday. Of course there is another referendum to consider. It is pencilled in for October in Quebec unless Premier Robert Bourassa can slalom around it, which is his best alpine discipline. He is the most agile of Canadian political athletes, but one day the people of his province are going to vote on constitutional options. Given the warp speed with which the world has transmogrified and the flow of nationalism in Quebec, it is possible Albertville will be the last time Quebec is part of the Canadian Olympic Team. By Lillehammer in 1994, Quebec might not only have its own semblance of a country, but its own national Olympic committee, its own flag, its own anthem, its own fleur-de-lis uniform.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, the separation of Quebec from Canada did not occur; however, the concern was very real at that time and throughout the 1990s.

The Games of 1992 raised the issue of patriotism in Canada. In a broader context, the decade after Calgary was an era for defining Canadian society. Amidst the

international changes and scandals that threatened to plague the nation, the Canadian press represented a Canada that was very concerned about its image, globally. This was evident in comments from short-track speed-skater Sylvie Daigle from Quebec, four-time member of the Olympic team:

I'm not following politics. I suppose that's a weakness on my part. Now Quebec is part of Canada, and I'm not going to dump on Canada. They've been paying me for almost 20 years. But I skate for myself, I don't think I'd feel differently if it were Quebec or Canada on my back. I don't think it would be an additional motivation for me to compete again if Quebec had its own team. When you go to compete for Canada, you don't always feel you're part of one country. The States, they see their flag and they go on their knees and place their hand over their heart. I don't think many of our athletes, French or English, feel that way about Canada. Maybe some do. Maybe they feel they're going to their countries first of all, but I don't think we have the same sense of country Americans do.<sup>25</sup>

During the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer, French-Canadian politician Pierre Cadieux attracted attention for commenting about the discrimination towards French athletes in English newspapers and the “flagrant cases of discrimination” on national sports teams.<sup>26</sup> The backlash caused by those comments emanated from both the newspapers and the COA. Newspaper journalists defended themselves, stating that any negative comments were directed to both English and French speaking athletes who did not perform as expected, regardless of background. The *Toronto Star* on February 21<sup>st</sup> wrote,

Phony comments not fit to print – Speaking from his hotel suite here in one of the world's most exclusive winter resorts, Canada's minister of sport called on the nation to rally as one behind our athletes during the closing days of the 16<sup>th</sup> Winter Olympics. The fact is that any Canadian competitor who has given a good account of himself or herself in France this month has been praised lavishly in print. The ones who have been panned are professional athletes, developed at no little cost to Canadian taxpayers, who have failed to perform respectably. They have not been giving all for their country. Here are

the matters the honorable minister should be concerned about: whether Canadian citizens are getting reasonable value for the money they're spending on sport – or whether the time is at hand to throw some of the excess baggage overboard.”<sup>27</sup>

COA officials also refuted that French speaking athletes were discriminated against on national teams. Carol Anne Letheran, COA president denied Cadieux' assertions: “from a team selection perspective, there is no discrimination against any athlete. The criteria for selection is set as much as four years in advance of a Games. They are voted on by a board of directors, and there are representative of all sports.”<sup>28</sup> Letheran also said the “COA seeks a linguistic balance in its Games mission staffs so all athletes are dealt with in the language of their choice” and Director of Communications Frank Ratcliffe followed that NSOs “take the best athletes, the athletes who make the selection criteria. The province the athletes are from or their language are not considered in the least.”<sup>29</sup>

Following the performances at those Games, the animosity and resentment of Canadians to what they contrastingly believed was special treatment of French-speaking athletes was clear. On February 28<sup>th</sup>, an entire page devoted to letters written to the *Toronto Star* expressed anger towards Quebec athletes:

Quebec didn't have an Olympic Team – On February 22<sup>nd</sup> *The Star* gave a laurel for five 'Quebecers' who won medals in the Olympics. Quebec did not send a team to the Olympics, Canada did, and those athletes won as members of the Canadian team. Yet no mention was made by your laurel-writer of Canadian team membership for those athletes. Until the day arrives that Quebec pays for and sends its own team to the Olympics, please respect the rest of Canadians by identifying members of our national team as Canadians<sup>30</sup> wrote reader Richard Lockhart of Toronto.

A closet separatist? - Hey! Did Quebec separate while I wasn't looking? On February 22<sup>nd</sup> you awarded a laurel to the Canadian gold medal winning short track speed skating team, who set a world record at the 1992 Olympic Games in Albertville, France. Fair enough. But you described them as “Quebecers”. As if to emphasize the point, you

went on to describe our silver medal winner in the men's 1000 meter speed skate as a Quebecer. Is there a closet separatist at One Yonge St?<sup>31</sup> wrote Claude Stewart of Toronto.

For Canada, the situation did not improve leading up to 1998. At a Nagano Games send-off party for athletes, the COA received heavy scrutiny for its lack of French-speaking representation:

Francophone flap – Quebec athletes lucky to get ‘bonne chance’ at Canadian send-off party. The Bloc Quebecois has a point. When the Canadian Olympic Association staged a rousing and patriotic (sort of) send-off for its athletes here at Canada House Thursday night, the event of yesterday's glittering opening ceremonies, French Canadians probably had a good right to feel insulted. So were people with any sense of good taste. No more than 5 per cent of the evening was spoken in French and a good-luck video featured almost entirely English spoken. The national figures interviewed naturally enough spoke English. But there was a definite lack of French-speaking celebrities, particularly when the message was always along the lines of “Do us proud. We're all behind you.” In Ottawa yesterday, Heritage Minister Sheila Copps told the House of Commons she is not happy that barely any French was used in introducing Canada's athletes to the media at the Olympics. Copps agreed with the Bloc Quebecois when MPs complained English was almost exclusively used and the French was badly spoken. The Bloc said it shows disrespect for francophones. Outside the Commons, Copps said francophone athletes have had great success at the Winter Olympics and that needs to be recognized in the way such events are handled. “I think it is an embarrassment for the COC. I think the Olympic committee could do a better job in representing the country in the same way that the athletes are doing right now.” Again, some Canadians didn't seem to empathize with the situation. Glen Noble of Toronto wrote the newspapers saying, “Quebec tastes own medicine – So, the Bloc Quebecois is upset over the lack of French used to introduce the Canadian Olympic athletes in a good-luck send-off video. This from a province with language police and no English on traffic and highway signs? Give me a break!”<sup>32</sup>

Evidently, the separation of French and English athletes required attention as it posed a threat to national unity in Canada, particularly because French athletes were so successful in winter-sports and therefore contributed immeasurably to this form of

Canadian nationalism. Though the *SFAF* was quick to highlight the concerns over bilingual sport policy, it was not until the late 1990s and the pre-Nagano ceremony incident that clear steps were taken to mend the issues and inequalities in the sport system created through language barriers.

### **National Pride Re-defined**

Between the 1992 and 1998 Winter Games, Canadian performances at the Games improved. The press took many opportunities to link victory with increased national pride, simultaneously ramping up expectations for success. Success was not possible without financial and infrastructural support. At the conclusion of the 1992 Games, the *Toronto Star* read, “Olympic tally simply the best – 7 medals for Canada outshine 1932 record – Oh Canada-what a performance! – the Olympic flame faded yesterday in Albertville, France, but a wonderful glow remains over Canada’s team as it celebrates this country’s greatest harvest of Winter Games medals ever. Canadians won seven medals in all-two gold, three silver and two bronze. That matches Canada’s best Winter Olympic medal haul.”<sup>33</sup> Not surprisingly, prior to the 1994 Games, hopes were high that Canadians could and would perform even better,

Golden opportunity – confident Canadians head for Norway looking like world beaters – an Olympic trip, like the one currently under way, used to be a tad embarrassing for a Canadian scribe... Happily, everything was different this week, as the Canadians arrived in Norway for the 17<sup>th</sup> Winter Olympics. There was a spring in their stride, or maybe swagger would be a better word. They were brimming with fully justified confidence for this is the strongest and most versatile team ever to represent the Great White North at one of these international sporting festivals. – there are 8 world champions going into these Games – seven medals seems modest – the grand total: a dozen, maybe a baker’s dozen, putting us where we ought to

be, among the world's best in those activities where low temperatures are a prerequisite.<sup>34</sup>

In just four years, the national press shifted the athletic performance narrative from shameful to world-beating swagger. With high expectations came high levels of patriotism and confidence for the athletes:

Games garb helps spark Olympic fever outbreak – flashy new outfits fill team members with confidence. 'I put on the jacket and I didn't want to take it off. I didn't think it would be any big deal just putting on our colours and stuff. But it was so much of a different feeling than I've felt before. I've been at the world juniors. You get that sort of feeling, but now you're at the Olympics and it's a bigger event and you know everyone is watching. It just sort of ran a chill up my spine,' said Team Canada goalie Manny Legace.<sup>35</sup>

Numerically, Canada had never experienced a better Winter Olympic Games, with athletes winning multiple medals in a day. The 1994 Games concluded with the following homage on the *Toronto Star* front page,

O Canada, what an Olympics – Winter Games our best ever – maybe it wasn't quite the perfect ending to a perfect WOG for Canada. It didn't miss by much, though – on either count. Let those among us who care deeply about pucks – there are, perhaps, more than a few of you out there – not get all ferocious or whiny about losing the hockey gold medal to Sweden in a round of penalty shots. To harp about it is to lose sight of what is far more important, which is a remarkable Olympic performance by the whole Canadian team. The silver necklaces earned by the hockey team should be remembered as a source of tremendous pride anyway. This team was not tabbed to go very far, but it overachieved on the world's largest sporting stage. So did several other Canadians, who combined to earn 13 medals, three of them gold and six silver. (Norway) deserves a bow. So, for other reasons, does Canada.<sup>36</sup>

This narrative of winning at the Olympics was new for the Canadian press. Policy followed narrative and narrative followed policy; sport leaders projected better future performances based on past results and increased funding was linked to improved performances.

Considerations of future funding and its importance were not lost upon the media after the 1994 Games:

Why our athletes glitter at Games – just six years ago, Canadian athletes failed to win even one gold medal at the Winter Olympics in Calgary. Today, early in the second week of the Lillehammer Games, two gold medallions are already in the bank, along with two silver and two bronze. *Star* sports editor Dave Perkins examined the reasons behind the turnaround, including the sporting legacy of those Calgary Games, the introduction into the Olympics of new medals sports such as freestyle skiing, and the breakup of the East Bloc. Why is Canada doing so well at these Winter Olympic Games? It was only six years ago at Calgary, remember, that Canada suffered the embarrassment of failing to win even one gold medal, settling for two silvers and three bronzes. Without getting into the minutiae, let's credit a few of the reasons for 1994's exceptional results... Clearly, for Canada, the vast amount of money spent on the Calgary Games is paying off. Susan Auch, to cite one example, has a world-class facility on which to practice in Calgary. The Calgary Olympics also turned out to be something of an organizational jumping off point. Strong governing bodies are in place in most disciplines now, where there might have been only a handful before.<sup>37</sup>

The formula for the Canadian sport system in the 1990s was becoming clear: enhanced infrastructure plus increased financial and developmental support equalled more medals. The benefits to Canadians remained merely symbolic in the form of nationalism generated, the benefits to athletes were more material. Additionally, having sport governing bodies in most sports provided further support for athletes. The result-oriented shift on the part of Sport Canada discussed at the end of the Chapter Two and the evidence of that implementation through the *Toward 2000* report were becoming apparent.

In the ten years from the Calgary to the Nagano Games, Canada's Olympic image had shifted significantly. After consecutively beating their own medal haul in the past two Games, expectations increased, and athletes delivered. In 1998, within a few

days of the opening ceremonies, Canada had its first three medals and won six in a single weekend. By the closing ceremonies, the *Toronto Star* assigned bragging rights to Canadian athletes and national pride to the rest of the country:

Before we go back to our normal routines, we owe our Olympians – those who won medals and those who won our hearts – the nation’s heartfelt thanks. The two-week display of speed, style and determination we saw in Nagano was the result of years of arduous training and countless lonely hours in chilly arenas and on deserted slopes. Only those driven to excel can fully understand the sacrifices they made. It was a fine show. It kindled our pride in being Canadian. It reminded us that winter is our time to shine.<sup>38</sup>

The discourse of winning, advanced by the press and Canadian sport organizations, however, shifted attention to those who were supported and did not win. For example, world figure skating champion Kurt Browning was branded the ultimate disappointment for Canadians in the press. Canadians had high hopes for Browning after his dominance in skating as four-time world champion through the seasons leading into the Olympics; but, he failed three times to reach the podium at the Olympics. The media filled the pages of the newspapers every four years with harsh remarks about Browning’s performances, often allowing this news to overshadow medal winners. Similarly, the increased pressure as well as disappointment that came from poor performances was not lost on the athletes. Ski jumper Ron Richards had a message for COA Vice-president Ken Read after he called their World Cup results an embarrassment:

Richards, perhaps fearful of similar comments once Olympic jumping starts today, says Read should be more supportive of Canadian athletes. ‘When I was a kid I supported Ken Read. Now that’s what I think he should be doing for us. That really hurt me when he said that. If I was some slug along for a free ride I might think that way. But he should know better. We had good press a few years ago when we were doing well. That was fine but then along came the Olympics and everyone expected us to win a medal.’<sup>39</sup>



There were some who critiqued the pressure placed on Canadian athletes. One respondent to the *Star* wrote that,

Canada's Olympians are not machines. I fail to understand why The Star finds it necessary to display humiliating photographs of our young athletes on the front page. I am referring specifically to pictures of Isabelle Brasseur and Kurt Browning. Is it not enough that these athletes, among the finest in the world "failed" before an audience of 2 billion? Must their families, friends, and fans be subjected to these mistakes over and over? As the daughter of a former Olympian (1948) and the mother of two former national competitors, I must try to make you understand that it is vital for this nation to show pride in its young people. They are not machines. They deserve the encouragement of a powerful newspaper like The Star."<sup>40</sup>

However, in spite of a few commentaries, the policy and promotion in the mid to late 1990s for government, sport organizations, and press alike had shifted to: "lack of medals...lack of support," not only financially, but emotionally as well, meaning that as athletes were failing to win medals, the support of the nation was faltering as well. A journalist for *Toronto Star* lamented:

Gold rush tarnishes other magical moments – there is something happening here to us, to Canadians, and it's a bloody shame. Gold lust. The alchemy of victory has become an intoxicant. We have grown drunk with the thrill of it, the greed of it. We, a nation of reasonable people, of men and women who have traditionally understood the inherent nobility of just trying, of doing one's best. Is that not enough anymore? We make them cry, these young athletes who carry the burden of their own aspirations and our impossible expectations. Even worse, we make them apologize for being imperfect, on one day, in one moment of miscalculation. We should be happy for them."<sup>41</sup>

By the late 1990s, Canadian athletes were competing and winning on the international stage and anything less than outstanding performances were branded a national shame. Moreover, between 1988 and 1998, the focus of the sport system and the national narrative became much more focused on the Winter Games.

### **The Mills Report**

The final influential sport policy of the 1990s was *Sport in Canada: Leadership, Partnership, and Accountability. Everybody's Business*, also referred to as the *Mills Report* of 1998. The document was centred on social, cultural, economic, and political roles of sport for Canada, eventually becoming the basis for Canada's first official *Canadian Sport Policy* document. The *Mills Report* of 1998 was an all-encompassing report that highlighted the major concerns that had emerged for Canadians throughout the 80s and 90s. The first recommendation of the report came directly from the *Dubin Inquiry*, namely, that "the government should maintain a substantial commitment to and support for sport in Canada over the long-term due to its overall benefit to Canada."<sup>42</sup> The report stated further that any commitment to funding should be tied to specific ethical standards, including drug-free sport, and more importantly, inclusion (i.e., "the development and delivery of services and programs in both official languages)."<sup>43</sup> This was exceedingly important for Canada when the intent of the report itself was to clearly establish the role of the government in sport as well as sport's contribution to national unity. The effect of the *Mills Report* was more substantial in the next decade, however, particularly following the incident at the Canadian Olympic Association's ceremony prior to the Nagano Games. It was imperative that the government address the concerns of both French- and English-speaking Canadians. The report intended to incorporate French-speaking athletes into the sport system and more closely align policies to their needs. Quite likely, the issue surrounding the exclusion of French athletes had much broader roots outside of sport and the role of Quebec in Canadian nationalism. However, the strong effort of the sport system was one of the first and just a single step in mending

the tense relationship between the province and the rest of the nation. While the *Mills Report* served to simply highlight discrepancies in the system, in the early 2000s, studies to implement official languages in the Canadian Sport System had a greater effect on policy changes.

### **Narrowing the Scope**

Due in large part to the policy changes, the 90s were a decade of accountability, leadership, inclusion, and fusion of the various sport organizations and systems that had existed to this point and the system itself was beginning to have some level of direction leading into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through the various policies, inquiries, task forces, and documents that emerged throughout this era, Canada strived to unify its sport system, interestingly at a time that the nation struggled to unify itself more broadly. Arguably, steps were being taken to provide structure and a frame of reference for sport programs in Canada and the performance results of Canadian athletes were evidence enough to political and sport boosters that it was working. This in turn had an impact on national unity and its connection with sport in Canada. Additionally, the sport system was making attempts at fostering inclusion for athletes with the addition of bilingual services. For this reason, at the intersection between English-French improving relations and gradually improving performances, international results lent support to the idea of Canadian winter-sport nationalism.

As the new millennium approached, Canada's place on the winter sport scene had evidently become more strongly defined. However, with weaknesses still existent in various sports and a lack of complete dominance in any one sport in particular,

Canadian winter-sport nationalism was still in its infancy. The facilities and conditions for training were available, athlete accountability for performances was being enforced, and communication between sporting organizations was gradually becoming more cohesive, with policies to provide direction and guidelines for future success. However, for nationalism to flourish in this paradigm of performance, athletes had to win with some regularity. In 1998, the IOC elected to allow professional hockey players to participate in the Olympics for the first time and, by the next quadrennial, the Canadian sport system witnessed the ability of sport success to generate a rabid nationalistic sentiment across the entire nation. For this reason, the early 2000s were characterized by the introduction of a new sport funding program, further narrowing the scope to a select few athletes with pre-determined medal potential.

### **Summary**

The theme of nationalism throughout the 1990s was characterized by a focus on pride as Canadians gradually began to outperform previous generations of athletes. Additionally, with the introduction of *Towards 2000*, the Canadian sport system had presented its first document that was solely sport excellence and achievement oriented, setting the tone for the way Canadians would view and criticize athlete performances in the future. Congruently, the challenges faced by Canada in regards to the Games demonstrated in this chapter through the separation and concerns of French and English athletes were also addressed by policy changes, as Canadian sport organizations were, under the *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework*, now required to offer programs in both French and English languages. The theme of funding and support in

this decade became apparent as the new policy structures created had the intent of placing a high priority on athlete and organization accountability. Between the *Dubin Inquiry* and the *SFAF*, there were various criteria to be met and fulfilled in order to be eligible for funding. Ultimately, these three themes are encompassed by the broader theme of legacy, changes, and development in Canadian sport as this era of policy development served to provide increased structure for Canada's high performance sport system. The legacy of these Games, therefore, is that with the enactment of various policy changes, future athletes, organizations, and officials had the necessary guidelines to help set the tone and direction for performance results in the future.

### **Endnotes**

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<sup>2</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 08, 1992, 4.

<sup>3</sup>Rob Beamish. "Olympic Ideals versus the Performance Imperative: The History of Canada's Anti-Doping Policies" in *Sport Policy in Canada*, ed. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, 224.

<sup>4</sup>Beamish. "Olympic Ideals versus the Performance Imperative," 225.

<sup>5</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 20, 1998, C3.

<sup>6</sup>*Montreal Gazette* (Montreal), February 11, 1992, C4.

<sup>7</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), January 28, 1992, C6.

<sup>8</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 06, 1992, F2.

<sup>9</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), January 28, 1992, C6.

<sup>10</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 05, 1992, C3.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, C3.

<sup>12</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 10, 1994, C6.

<sup>13</sup>Beamish. "Olympic Ideals versus the Performance Imperative," 228.

<sup>14</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 06, 1992, B4.

<sup>15</sup>Macintosh and Whitson. *The Game Planners*, 136-7.

<sup>16</sup>Macintosh and Whitson. *The Game Planners*, 138.

<sup>17</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 15, 1994, C2.

<sup>18</sup>Macintosh and Whitson. *The Game Planners*, 138.

<sup>19</sup>Macintosh and Whitson. *The Game Planners*, 138.

<sup>20</sup>Lisa M. Kikulis. "Contemporary Policy Issues in High Performance Sport" in *Sport Policy in Canada*, ed. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 106.

<sup>21</sup>Kikulis. "Contemporary Policy Issues in High Performance Sport," 109.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>23</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 05, 1992, C1.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, C1.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., C1.

<sup>26</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 22, 1992, C1.

<sup>27</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 21, 1992, C1.

<sup>28</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 22, 1992, A16.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., A16.

<sup>30</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 28, 1994, A17.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., A17

<sup>32</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 14, 1998, F3.

<sup>33</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 24, 1992, A1.

<sup>34</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 10, 1994, T2.

<sup>35</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 09, 1994, C1.

<sup>36</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 28, 1994, A1.

<sup>37</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 21, 1994, A1.

<sup>38</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 22, 1998, F2.

<sup>39</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 09, 1992, E2.

<sup>40</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 18, 1992, A16.

<sup>41</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 25, 1998, B3.

<sup>42</sup>Beamish. "Olympic Ideals versus the Performance Imperative," 231.

<sup>43</sup>Graham Fraser. "Official Languages and the Canadian Sport System: Steady Progress, Constant Vigilance Needed" in *Sport Policy in Canada*, ed. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, 360.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR – The Introduction of a New Sports Program**

Sport policy development and the attendant promotion of nationalism which characterized the 1990s in Canada presented new opportunities for Sport Canada and the COA in the 2000s. Having been supported by the *Best Ever* program for the better part of 15 years, Olympic athletes could benefit from a further development of the sport funding program. Canadian athletes had gradually climbed on the medal count through the previous ten years and winning Olympic medals became increasingly more realistic. As a result, representations of nationalism reflected through the newspapers detailed a strong Canadian pride that was developed alongside, and dependent upon, the winning of medals. Successful athletes gave sport bureaucrats and boosters greater leverage to lobby the Canadian government for more funding. The newspapers relentlessly reported on the victories, or in some instances, disappointments of Canadian athletes, making the connection to their effects on Canadian nationalism and demonstrating a gradual shift in the emphasis on winning over the previous appreciation for the best efforts of Olympic athletes. The narrative on winning, invoked by the newspapers linked Canadian nationalism directly to sporting victories, at once legitimizing government spending and expanding sport programs. In a phrase, victory was good for Canada.

Within these new narratives, the *Best Ever* funding program, developed in the early 1980s, was no longer sufficient to support Canada's aims within international sport. The increasing emphasis on the development of sport policy in the 1990s, held accountable by medal victories, led to an opportunity for a new, overarching, high-achieving plan – *Own the Podium*, which justified further investment from the Canadian

government and corporate partners to steer Canadian athletes to ever-higher achievements. From the years 2000 to 2002, Sport Canada developed the nation's first official sport policy, the *Canadian Sport Policy 2002*. Alongside this, there were changes that came within the COA that affected the direction of future sport in Canada, with the election of a new Chief Executive Officer. By 2003, with the bid for hosting of the 2010 Games won by the city of Vancouver, expectations for Canadian athletes were exceedingly high. *Own the Podium* provided a roadmap for Canadian success in Vancouver, which became part of the comprehensive funding package which the Canadian government committed in the long term to the Olympic project. In addition to supporting infrastructure, the importance of winning medals for the host nation was positioned by Sport Canada and the COA as an issue of historical and national importance. The fact that Canada did not win a gold medal in Montreal in 1976 or Calgary in 1988 became a focal point for the shaming narrative advanced through the press. The massive economic and human resource investment for 2010 had to be accompanied by returns in Canadian athlete performance. As such, through the press, Canadian spectators and taxpayers were also being prepared to host the Olympic Games. At stake was national pride.

Without question, the most important gold medal for Canadians at the Winter Olympic Games, one that had eluded them for 50 years, was in men's hockey. Though the newspapers reflected an increase in narratives of nationalism for sports overall, there was no doubt that hockey was the most important. Since 1988, it was difficult to make any strong link between hockey and Canadian nationalism, given that teams had not won the hockey tournament in any of the Olympic Games since 1952. However, since



hockey represented the impetus for Canada's national sporting pride, the 2002 Winter Games were an important igniter for the development of *Own the Podium*.

Consequently, after the 1990s provided some structure and acknowledgment of the core problems in high performance sport, the new millennium brought with it an opportunity to focus away from issues and concerns, towards the simplicity of pure victory, which newspapers claimed was becoming increasingly and solely more important to Canadians and to Canadian nationalism.

### **2002 Salt Lake City Games**

The Canadian Olympic team entered Salt Lake City in 2002, after its best Winter Games performance ever in 1998 in Nagano with a count of 15 medals. Prior to the Games, the COA experienced a major structural change with the election of new COA Chief Executive Officer Jim Thompson. The *Toronto Star* reported that Thompson's new goal as COA chief was to develop a new direction for Canadian high performance sport, building, "a more efficient system to develop elite athletes in this country and [Thompson] will talk to as many athletes, coaches, federations, training centres, and government officials as he can."<sup>1</sup> Thompson stated that Canada is "at a crossroads in high-performance sport in Canada. The COA has to work with the rest of the Canadian sport community, with government and with the private business sector to make our Canadian sport system as good as it can possibly be. We owe it to the athletes. My job is to put as many athletes on the podium as I can and to fund them properly so they can do that."<sup>2</sup> During a period of economic instability in the early 2000s, the Canadian government reduced support for amateur sports. However, though the COA's revenue

dropped 10 percent, it reduced grants to athletes by only one percent. Canadian IOC member Paul Henderson added that he would like to see the COA “return to its core business, which is producing elite athletes. I think they’ve gone too far into what governments do, which is participation...”<sup>3</sup> The new CEO wanted people to be realistic about Canada’s medal hunt in the Winter and Summer Games: “I want more Olympic success for Canada...but sometimes we’re too obsessed with results and we don’t celebrate the successes we have. Be patient; other (athletes) will come to the fore” said Thompson.<sup>4</sup> That same day the *Toronto Star* reported the following:

Thompson’s task will be to wade through all that bureaucracy to come up with policies to accomplish what he said yesterday is the COA’s main goal - supporting athletes in reaching the Olympic podium.... It’s one thing for Thompson to say, as he did very eloquently yesterday, that the athletes are the stars of the show and everything he and the COA do will be to support them. It will be quite another thing to put that into practice... The COA is a tired and ineffective organization. They never come up with innovative programs to help or promote the athletes. They do the bare minimum and they do so many things at a bush-league level. Thompson needs to turn it into a professional organization.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, newspapers reported that with the appointment of Thompson to COA chief, there was an opportunity for the COA to take a leadership role in an amateur sports community.<sup>6</sup> Taking into account the earlier comments made by Canadian IOC member Paul Henderson, the press echoed these sentiments, calling upon the Canadian government to support young athletes not just for participation but, rather, to target them as future Olympians. This new policy emphasis on the Olympic podium required an early detection of potential Canadian athletes, enhanced developmental support for these athletes, and a major shift on the importance of winning for athletes and spectators alike. To be fair, although Canada’s sport system had been slowly shifting towards a greater

focus on athlete performance, this early millennium focus was significantly different and the press was not initially onside with the shift.

As the 2002 Olympics opened, the Canadian team began strongly as it had in previous Games, particularly during the first few days. However, by the end of the first week the medal count was lower than projected. Just before the Winter Games began, the *Toronto Star* reported on the expectations that the COA had for its Canadian athletes:

Grandstanding COA places unnecessary pressure on athletes – the Canadian Olympic team has been set up for failure. And by its own association to boot. There has been an undercurrent of grumbling about the Canadian Olympic Association’s proclamation that the team is gunning for a third-place finish at these Winter Games...If you do the math – and the COA obviously hasn’t – it doesn’t make any sense at all to project that the Canadian team can finish third at the XIX Winter Olympics. – with 10 new events it would take about 23 medals to place third – that is out of Canada’s reach unless it has the Games of a lifetime, and most of those athletes considered to have medal potential fulfill it...The thing is the COA really has no business putting those type of expectations on the athletes, especially when it has so little to do with producing and preparing them for the Games. It really amounts to nothing more than grandstanding. But Canadian *chef de mission* Sally Rehorick defends the COA’s stance, “You’ve gotta be ambitious. We make no apologies for that...if we didn’t aim so high, we might be criticized for making it too modest.”<sup>7</sup>

The COA’s emphasis on winning brought criticism. However, failure to achieve these expectations created ideal circumstances for the COA in the year prior to the introduction of a new sport funding program. Former Olympian Ken Read stated that a low medal count was in fact better for Canada because it served to highlight some of the underlying problems in the sport system and it is arguably from this juncture that *Own the Podium* drew its support. When COA official Mark Lowry was asked about the low medal count early on in the Games, he said one problem was the lack of targets for

athletes, and admitted that his association was responsible for that.<sup>8</sup> The 1990s were a period of realizing the shortcomings in the Canadian sport system and identifying those programs and individuals that should be held accountable for those ‘weaknesses.’ The COA utilized the turn of the millennium to mark a change towards correcting the Canadian sport system.

Ultimately, the path was straight and narrow and the options for future direction seemed clear. On February 19, halfway through the Games, the *Star* reported the COA’s opinion that setting priorities would be the secret to success for Canada:

The COA said it hoped Canada would do even better in Salt Lake City than it did in Nagano. We got 15 medals in Japan 1988, good for 5<sup>th</sup> place in a pretty big world. The COA said it hoped we’d finish third this time. If we want to win at these Games – and we do despite all the talk about just being happy to send someone and have them set a personal best, yada yada yada – we need to set some priorities. Find the things we are best at (there’s a cheap laugh there somewhere) and put the money into developing athletes in that sport. Take the things we are marginal at – and there are plenty of those – and flush. It’s an easy concept to understand, but the choices would be painful to make, as the COA is finding as it tries to steer its limited money – about 15million a year – to the sports in which we are most likely to hit paydirt. “That’s dead on what we’re trying to do. We don’t want to kill any sports, but we want to link access to the gas tank to the chances of success.” (Mike Chambers COA president). If Canada really means business we should skimp on summer sports and invest in the winter variety, this being a nation of ice and snow and all, at least until global warming turns all of North America into the everglades. ... There’s a danger in cutting sports funding, of course. But it’s a tough world that demands tough choices. And we’d better start now if we want to have the Winter Games in Canada in 2010 and not embarrass ourselves in the medal standings the way we did in Calgary or Montreal. It’s either that or forever find Canada buried in the standings between Belarus and Argentina.<sup>9</sup>

Although not initially onside, the press chose to highlight the changes that the COA had already considered, and to convince Canadians that this was the most realistic way of

achieving sporting success. Additionally, through the early 2000s, the newspaper representations of the link between winter sporting excellence, specifically, and nationalism were becoming stronger, and became an important theme after Vancouver was awarded the 2010 Games in 2003. It was not a stretch to link nationalism to winter sport success, given Canada's long history of competitiveness in hockey, skiing, and curling. However, a simultaneous lack of support for sports on the margins of success was a turn in policy.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Canada's successes resulted only in increasing expectations for greater success going forward. Newspapers repeatedly invoked the narrative connection of international athletic victory as both contributor to, and evidence of, national pride. At the same time, journalists played the role of ensuring that enhanced expectations unrequited did not result in decreased levels of national pride. In the press, Canadian athletic successes demonstrated the merits of a functioning high performance sport system; lack of success was blamed on the COA setting expectations that were considered too high.

Appealing to a sense of Canadian nationalism to sell newspapers was achieved through the positioning of nostalgia and a fantasy-based link between past and present – in this case winter sports, as evident in this *Toronto Star* article:

Plenty of reasons for optimism – The Games are finally underway and Canadians are optimistic, many expecting Canada's best-ever Winter Olympics. For the past few years, Canadians have done extremely well in winter sports on the international stage. Not just in the glamour sports but also in sports that we in the media tend to focus on only in Olympic years, sports such as skeleton, cross-country skiing and, of course, both long- and short- track speed skating. Thus, the feeling shared by many that Canadian athletes could surpass their best-ever medal total of 15 from Nagano four years ago. Medals bring me to the debate over support for amateur sport in our country. Should the focus

be on participation or high-performance? My long time skiing partner and former Olympian Ken Read puts it best. He says the Crazy Canucks were inspired as were other young men and women when Nancy Greene stood on the podium at Grenoble, which wouldn't have occurred if she had finished 20<sup>th</sup>. His point is that excellence on the international stage encourages participation at all levels. These are indeed the Games of snow and ice and as such hold a special attraction for Canadians. To excel in the glamour sports of the Summer Games, our young men and women have little choice but to head south for coaching and facilities. However, when the snow flies, Canadians need to look no further than the back yard, down the street, or the nearest hill. For that reason, the level of participation in winter sports is far higher. And when the athletes show Olympic potential they can stay home in Canada where the facilities and coaching exist that can take them to the top. These facilities exist in Calgary, a legacy of the 1988 Games. They're not only used by Canadians but by athletes from all over the world.<sup>10</sup>

Here the *Toronto Star* familiarized the shifts in current policy by invoking the past and links to the past – at the same time building national sentiment simultaneously as a calming but inspirational influence. Defining the nation was never old news and sport always offered a ready-made source of information to inspire the cultural elements of nationalism: “Collective imagination is fuelled by the media representations that define a nation inwardly in terms of its own history, invoking familiar, indigenous cultural traditions.”<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, nationalism required a capacity to cut across generations.

### **The Role of Hockey**

Before 1956, Canada had won every Olympic hockey gold medal but one. Between 1952 and 2002, the men's team did not win any gold medals, a fact not lost upon Canadian fans, sports administrators, and the Canadian government. Indeed, it was the failure of the Canadian men's teams to win hockey gold which arguably led to the development of the Canadian sport system in the 1960s. Winning international hockey

matches was pivotal to Canadian identity. The longer the medal drought, it seemed, the more desperate the tone of the newspaper articles. On Feb 13, 2002, the *Star* reported:

Hockey stars have chance to save our pride. As if trying to win gold in men's hockey for the first time in 50 years wasn't quite enough. With every passing day, however, it becomes clearer that Canada's success or failure at these 19<sup>th</sup> Winter Olympics will be measured by the final result of Wayne Gretzky's collection of millionaire hockey players. The sense of national expectation is becoming a sense of national need.<sup>12</sup>

As narrow as such a perspective may appear, in the Canadian press, this was particularly accurate. For sixteen days of the Olympic Games, the coverage of the successes of other athletes remained at the margins of the men's hockey team. The *Star* additionally reported that "Hockey is still central to the mentality of Canadians, but it's somewhat hidden because of all the defeats we have suffered over the years."<sup>13</sup> The newspapers repeatedly insisted that the only way for Canada to realize its national pride was through the victory of the men's hockey team at these Olympics.

When the 2002 Games closed in Salt Lake City, Canada again came home with a record medal haul. Though sights were set on third place, Canada finished fourth in the medal total with 17, but, most importantly, gold medals in men's and women's hockey. As represented in the media, this success was a testament to and justification for the "proper," albeit unequal, distribution of funding for athletes. The COA's Podium 2002 program, awarded \$1.25 million to Canada's top 93 athletes some eight months before the Winter Games began. Other athletes not considered medal hopefuls received their regular funding but nothing extra. However, the COA claimed that every athlete who won a medal at the 2002 Games was on the list of Podium 2002 recipients: "We could count heads and give a little bit to everyone. In the past we would've given equal

amounts. But then you don't give enough to anyone. We wish we didn't have to do this, but that is going to be the experience.”<sup>14</sup> The 2002 Games set the stage for the introduction of a new sports program in Canada. Administrators directly equated athlete success to funding, rendering an opportune moment for Sport Canada and the COA to lobby for more funding. To this end, administrators rationalized the uneven distribution of funding as fair and necessary to support podium athletes. In addition, newspapers ensured that Canadians were saturated with feelings of euphoria and national pride after the Games, and with Vancouver on the horizon, what better time to introduce a new, enhanced funding program?

### **2002 Canadian Sport Policy and Own the Podium**

In addition to Canadian success at the Salt Lake City Games, in the latter part of 2002, Canadian policy experienced another major change, the creation of the first ever *Canadian Sport Policy*. The 2002 Canadian Sport Policy was the federal government's formal acknowledgement that Canada, as a sporting nation, had to focus on both sport participation and sporting excellence. The pillars of the policy centred on enhanced excellence and participation, along with enhanced capacity and interaction. As noted by Thibault and Harvey, according to Sport Canada, “the priority of capacity and interaction provided support to participation and excellence. Capacity referred to putting in place the necessary systems (e.g. leadership, infrastructure, sport science and technology) to support participation and excellence, while interaction referred to increasing collaboration and communication among all stakeholders in sport.”<sup>15</sup> The eventual outcome of the 2002 Canadian Sport Policy and its practical uses were



somewhat unrealized in its early stages. The argument that was frequently made was that hosting major sporting events, such as the Olympics, in combination with the international success of Canadian athletes inspired average Canadians to participate in sport. The trickle-down effects of elite sport on mass participation were widely utilized to justify increased spending on high performance athletes. This was precisely the purpose that the 2002 Canadian Sport Policy served at the time of its creation. The hosting of international competition in particular became an important foundation for *Own the Podium* which emerged from the 2002 Policy.

In July of 2003, Vancouver was awarded the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Immediately, Canadians were reminded in the press that Canada was the only host nation not to win a gold medal. To ensure that this wouldn't happen for the third time in Vancouver, key stakeholders collaborated in an effort to ensure that, in 2010, Canada would "own the podium" and finish first in the medal table. *Own the Podium* included collective efforts from Sport Canada, the Canadian Paralympic Committee, the Canadian Olympic Committee, winter National Sport Organizations, and the Vancouver Organizing Committee. Key actions for *Own the Podium* were to "establish targets to assess athlete and sport system performance, enhance the use of sport science, and establish the role of national sport centres."<sup>16</sup> The hope was that a more unified approach with specific targets would result in increased co-ordination and communication between key stakeholders in the sport system. This subsequently meant that focus would need to be directed to those athletes and sports with the greatest medal potential, in order to ensure that performance targets would be met. In 2004, key stakeholders met to review the most ideal strategy for achieving the goals set through

*OTP*. In the same year, the Canadian Olympic Committee set up a Task Force, co-ordinated by Cathy Priestner-Allinger, to review and analyze the best way to implement *OTP*. Though no final decisions were made prior to the 2006 Olympic Games in Turin, by this time, *OTP* was beginning to take shape and particular strategies were slowly being put into practice for those Games.

### **2006 Turin Games**

As discussed, an integral and strategic part of the *OTP* campaign was first to identify potentially successful athletes, second to support them and, third, to ensure those athletes won medals. As a result, there was a surge in scientific and technological support in sport that prepared Canada's winter Olympic athletes for Turin. Turin became the test case for the Vancouver Olympics. It was no longer simply enough to identify medal potential athletes; the program needed to provide optimal training conditions for the realisation of this potential:

Olympic head games – 12 sports psychologists join Canadians – Hopes of averting our habit of choking. – A study conducted by 13 major sports groups concludes that the country's Olympians have a history of choking on their big days, meaning Canada consistently returns home with a medal haul well below targets. Judy Gross, athlete's services coordinator for the COC and a trained sport psychologist, said the increased presence of sports psychologists at the Turin Games isn't a magic pill to put athletes on the podium but it's part of a long-term strategy. All 12 psychologists have been working extensively with the athletes and teams leading up to the Olympics, a change from the past when they were often brought in just for the Games.<sup>17</sup>

In regards to science and technology, the *Star* reported that

...officials put funds toward technology – everything from new ski wax compounds to lightweight, aerodynamic hockey jerseys and special video recording software – have Turin-bound nations scrambling to keep pace. Or in Canada's case, catch up. 'We've never

had a technology program for high-performance sport that is well-organized, centrally led and well-financed,' says Roger Jackson, CEO of *Own the Podium* and a former Olympic rower. By this time, 15 to 20 percent of *Own the Podium's* annual budget was distributed into a "Top Secret Program" to fund the sporting equivalent of the arms race – the laboratory battle for a competitive edge.<sup>18</sup>

Ultimately, in order for the *OTP* campaign to gain momentum and support from Canadians, it would have to be well-represented in the press and, ultimately, based on its premises, produce results. And the only results that were acceptable were podium finishes, announcing a distinct cultural shift for Canadian sport. Over the years, Canada's ski program was highly criticized for the lack of results it was producing; however, by 2006, finishing off of the podium was nothing short of a promise for the future: "Fourth a sign of progress – next step to go from medal hopefuls to favourites – hat-trick of fourth places finishes for Canadian skiers – a sign of progress as Canada heads to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics."<sup>19</sup>

As the *Toronto Star* justified results of the ski and bobsled teams, and the performances of other athletes, its most interesting position came early on February 9. For almost 20 years, papers reported on the success of hockey and what that would mean for Canadian nationalism and for the overall success of Canada's sport system. And though the hockey team fell short of expectations at seemingly every Olympic Games, hopes were never diminished during the following quadrennial. As a result, it would seem that four years after winning its first hockey gold medal in 50 years, expectations were for a gold medal, and a disappointment even if the team did finish anywhere else on the podium. However, the difference between 2006 and the Olympics of 1988 was enhanced public funding and the accompanying expectations of success.

Yet in 2006, with Canada on the brink of the inception of a new sporting program, the following article was printed in the *Toronto Star*:

Puck pursuit shortchanges others, but falling short of men's hockey gold could be good news for Vancouver 2010 – win this time and we will have won two straight....then to lose on home ice would be a disaster – but lose this time and the run up four years hence is totally different. The (undoubtedly) new coaching and management team will have a new style and outlook. The players will be focused on regaining the prize somehow swiped from them in Turin. Plus – and this is the key – by the time 2010 rolls around, Canadian taxpayers will have been asked to lay out between \$2 and \$3 billion for the Games, whose costs already are skyrocketing. Organizers will want the focus not on the destruction of the public purse but on our hockey intelligentsia pulling together to regain our lost national prestige, etc. Right there on Canadian ice, too. So it won't be the end of the world if we lose that one big medal – this time. And, regardless of the hockey team's fortunes, there will be plenty of other good stuff to celebrate. There always is.<sup>20</sup>

For the Turin Games, newspapers highlighted the positives of losing hockey gold before the Games began. Having spent the majority of the 2002 Games building Canadian nationalism around the hockey gold medal, this was an odd way to approach the 2006 tournament before it even started. And although blatantly stated that taxpayers would be expected to support the new system, it was overshadowed by the idea of redeeming Canadian hockey supremacy, before it was even lost. Perhaps journalists viewed the 2002 victory as an aberration or perhaps manipulating the Canadian public into supporting the new sport system was intentional.

Ultimately, Canada did not win the hockey gold medal. In fact, the team did not advance past the semifinals, and so Canadians had been prepared for that potential disappointment by the press. However, newspapers reminded Canadians that the nation had other sports, and that it wasn't (for the first time in at least 50 years) all about hockey. The narratives focused upon other Canadian successes: “these are ‘our’ athletes

Canada!” The positive sentiment around losing hockey was evident, “Failure in hockey clouds great day – it was a day when all Canadians could be justifiably proud of our Olympic athletes, especially after Canadian women won four medals, including two golds. Indeed, it was our best day in Winter Games history.”<sup>21</sup> And so, even with the failure of the men’s hockey team, there was no shortage of Canadian pride.

By the end of the 2006 Games, Canada had again exceeded its medal haul from the previous Winter Olympics with seven gold, ten silver, and seven bronze for a total of 24 medals. Though 2006 is not typically characterized as a year during which the athletes were supported through the *OTP* Campaign, it was a year of evaluating which *OTP* components were successful to date and how to improve upon those aspects that needed fine-tuning before the Games came back to Canada for the third time. At the surface level, the most obvious critique of *OTP* was that, in order for the program to retain this name, athletes actually had to “own the podium.” Ultimately, 24 medals were wonderful for Canada, but with less than a third of those being gold, were Canadians really ‘owning’ winter sports? In order for the program to be successful in the future, standing on the highest part of the podium was a must. The COC, according to CEO Chris Rudge recognized that the kind of medal would need to be factored into consideration sooner or later. “You can’t “own the podium” with bronze medals while hearing someone else’s anthem. There’s a reason the official medal standing lists countries by gold medals won,” he opined.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, the Turin Games were positive for those who viewed Olympic success as Canada’s success. The *Toronto Star* played upon this narrative: “These, though, in Turin, were terrific Games for Canada, competitively, the best ever and spot-on in

building towards the ‘*Own the Podium*’ crescendo of Vancouver 2010.”<sup>23</sup> This was precisely the finish that the sports organizations needed to push *Own the Podium* to success and to gain public, private, and government support for the program. The estimated costs for the 2010 Vancouver Games, (and it is important to note that rarely do costs end up below budget, in fact, the costs oftentimes end up significantly higher) were reported by the *Star* in early February,

Pound optimistic about 2010 cost – Vancouver’s Winter Olympic budget woes shouldn’t make Canadians worry that they’re in for a replay of Montreal’s 1976 fiscal fiasco, IOC member Dick Pound said yesterday. Vancouver officials recently announced their capital budget for the 2010 Winter Games is now \$580 million, up from \$470 million they had estimated in 2002.”<sup>24</sup>

With such extensive funds being put into a sport system, the press encouraged Canadians to expect great success at the Olympics, which was precisely the role that the Turin Games played.

### ***The Next Generation of Canadian Winter Sport Nationalism***

Following the early 2000s, Canada’s continued success and growing achievements in winter sports had generated a significant momentum shift in support of Canadian winter sport nationalism. The *Toronto Star* led its readers to believe that the changes in high performance sport funding toward a merit-based approach for athletes was optimal for success on the international stage. This in turn rationalized increased spending, which Canadians were seemingly on board with, in the creation of a policy centred around early identification of podium potential athletes in conjunction with increased spending on technology and science research. It appeared as though the newspapers were in support of the idea that a policy directed toward owning the podium

and the medal count was the most opportune approach to fostering Canadian nationalism.

However, though the implementation of some aspects of *OTP* was already beginning to bear fruit in the early millennium, the only real testament to this new system would be the 2010 Games of Vancouver. When the Games were being brought back to Canada, Vancouver presented an opportunity to showcase Canadian culture, the most important aspect of which would be winter sport supremacy.

### **Summary**

The clear legacy of the early millennium was the introduction of science and technology to Canada's high performance sport system. Though there had been efforts made in various ways to provide Canadian athletes with a competitive edge in the past, the 2002 and 2006 Winter Games were the first Olympics where significant amounts of funding were invested into these specific endeavors. As a result, funding and support was increased significantly throughout the early 2000s, and a new sport funding program, *Own the Podium* was also introduced, although athletes were still not formally competing within that framework. However, it was an opportune time to begin preparing athletes with the *Own the Podium* program because, in 2003, the city of Vancouver won the bid to host 2010 Winter Olympic Games. This would be the third time that Canada had the opportunity to host and it was imperative to meet the challenge of having a team strong enough to finally win a gold medal at home again. In regard to nationalism, the early implementation of *OTP*, a program dedicated to medal count, combined with ever-improving performances by Canadians seemed to bring the reality of possible winter-

sport supremacy to the forefront for Canadians. For the first time in over 50 years, the men's hockey team won the gold medal and athletic potential appeared to be higher than it had been for previous generations. As a result, winter sport nationalism received a significant boost from the media throughout this era.

### **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), January 30, 2002, E1.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, E1.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, E5.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, E5.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, E5.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, E5.

<sup>7</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 09, 2002, C1.

<sup>8</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 18, 2002, D7.

<sup>9</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 19, 2002, A12.

<sup>10</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 09, 2002, C4.

<sup>11</sup> Liz Crolley and David Hand. (2002) *Football, Europe, and the Press*. (London, Frank Class Publishers, 2002), 159.

<sup>12</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 13, 2002, D6.

<sup>13</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 18, 2002, D4.

<sup>14</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 25, 2002, C8.

<sup>15</sup>Thibault & Harvey. "The Evolution of Federal Sport Policy from 1960 to Today," 26.

<sup>16</sup>Kikulis. "Contemporary Policy Issues in High Performance Sport," 115.

<sup>17</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 04, 2006, A12.

<sup>18</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 09, 2006, E5.

<sup>19</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 21, 2006, C3.

<sup>20</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 09, 2006, G8.

<sup>21</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 23, 2006, A26, Editorials.

<sup>22</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 09, 2006, B6.

<sup>23</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 26, 2006, A1.

<sup>24</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 10, 2006, C7.



## **CHAPTER FIVE – *Own the Podium***

By the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, the third time that Canada played host to the Games, *Own the Podium* was the main Olympic funding program for Canadian athletes. Following the first decade of the twenty-first century and gradually improving medal results for Canada, these Games served as a testament to the success or failure of the program, not only in terms of winning medals, but in whether or not it would subsequently be able to strengthen Canadian nationalism, and, if so, would an evident increase in Canadian pride be enough to sustain future support for *OTP*?

The amount of funding invested in *Own the Podium* had far exceeded the programs that preceded it, including Game Plan '76 and Best Ever '88, responsible for funding the Montreal and Calgary Games respectively. As a result, this raised public pressure and expectations for both officials and athletes to produce results. Ultimately, the *Own the Podium* program ushered in a new understanding of Canadian athletic “excellence,” defined solely by the athletes’ ability to win medals. This was in opposition to past programs directed toward uplifting athlete performance at a more individual level, which included achieving personal bests and setting Canadian records.<sup>1</sup> Funding became less evenly distributed and those with podium potential were given significantly greater support than other athletes, coming not only in the form of monetary benefit, but also through access to elite coaches, doctors, and facilities:

With the final sprint to a Games comes the need to laser focus on the optimization of medal opportunities and conversion at the coming set of Games. As a result of this narrowing of focus, it is inevitable that a number of longer term, potentially more sustainable system lifting projects may be paused in the short term.<sup>2</sup>

These inconsistencies were met with strong criticism in early newspaper representations. Ultimately, the *Own the Podium* program created three concerns in its inaugural year. Firstly, the title given to the program, *Own the Podium*, was perceived as arrogant and altogether un-Canadian. Second, the original funding initially promised towards the program was significantly increased in the preceding quadrennial. And finally, the structure of the program itself created a notion of ideological excellence that seemed to dominate the new sport policy and put tremendous pressure on athletes in order to ensure that they earned the financial support of the government prior to and throughout the Games.

However, particularly toward the conclusion of the Games, as the Canadian team gradually rose in the medal chart, the message of “owning the podium” was distilled into everyday common sense, garnering very strong support in the newspapers by the end of the Vancouver Olympics. The newspapers from 2010 demonstrated a sharp surge in representations of this new brand of Canadian nationalism during the Vancouver Games.

This chapter provides an overview of the program’s objectives and approaches to sport funding as presented through the policy itself, followed by newspaper representations of the program to the public during the Games, at which point there is an evident shift from criticism to praise as the Games progress. This overview outlines the intent and mission of the program, alongside a breakdown of the distribution of funds, which leads to a discussion of the athletic elitism existent in the Canadian sport system. The second section discusses in detail first the expectations and secondly the results of the implementation of *Own the Podium* through its first full quadrennial. Furthermore,

the chapter clearly defines the role of the program in establishing and building a new brand of Canadian nationalism through sport, punctuating a bolder and brasher winter sport nationalism for which elite sport leaders had lobbied for decades. Finally, the chapter draws some conclusions about this shift in the role of the high performance sport system in Canada, overall, and the concerns raised by an enhanced focus on elite sport.

### **The Program**

In 2010, the Canadian city of Vancouver played host to the Winter Olympic Games, 22 years subsequent to the Calgary Games. The title for the *OTP* program was represented in the newspapers as a slogan for Canadians, once again, placing a large emphasis on winning medals and portraying Canada as not only a competitor, but a winter sporting powerhouse internationally. The mission of *OTP* was and is for Canada to be a “world leader in high-performance sport,” with the hope that it will rank supreme in podium performances during both Olympic and Paralympic Games. The vision of this funding program was to increase integration and develop research in the broader sport infrastructure in order to enhance opportunity for excellence in coaching, training, sport medicine, and various other techniques that would contribute to improving Canadian performances. Long term, the goals set for the Canadian Olympic team by *OTP* have remained the same since its inception in 2005. Similarly, as mentioned, *OTP* distributed funding explicitly based on athlete potential and the performances leading up to the Olympics, rather than being divided equally among the provinces as it was for the Calgary Olympic Games. Ultimately, the new program was

...primarily a service provider, albeit one with resources to target those areas (athletes, coaches, programs and strategies) where results

are most likely to be obtained. This method is meant to operate on the basis of contributions (expertise, partnerships, human and financial resources) that stakeholders wish to align or pool together with the new organization in order to achieve common goals directed at the shared vision of being the best in the world.<sup>3</sup>

*OTP* assumed responsibility for assessing the potential of individuals and teams in Canada's high performance sport system, determining podium targets for Olympic and Paralympic Games, and for making recommendations regarding the allocation of funds from national funding sponsors.<sup>4</sup> Its main initiatives were enhanced coaching and technical leadership, training and competitions, sports science and medical support, and organizational capacity, in order to create a more results-based high performance system. One component of the program, Innovations 4 Gold (I4G) is "Own the Podium's applied sport research program to support cutting edge/competitive advantage initiatives in proactive sports medicine, human performance and sports engineering. I4G supports research projects, which are helping Canada win more medals at the Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games."<sup>5</sup> Canada's Minister of State for Sport claimed that, "From learning more about how sleep can help an athlete's recovery to working on head-injury prevention screens, this cutting-edge research is going to provide lasting benefits to our athletes."<sup>6</sup>

Currently, "Own the podium, a not-for-profit organization, prioritizes, and determines investment strategies to national sport organizations in an effort to deliver more Olympic and Paralympic medals for Canada...[to] advance the excellence goal highlighted in the Canadian Sport Policy."<sup>7</sup> The Government of Canada is the largest contributor to the funding of *OTP*.

In 2010 at the Vancouver Olympic Games, Canadian athletes achieved an all-time record 14 gold medals, what sport leaders argued proved the success of the *OTP* campaign that had been implemented years prior. Additionally, the Canadian team finished third overall in medal count, nine positions higher than Calgary in 1988, and brought home both the men's and women's gold medals in ice hockey. Between the Olympic and Paralympic sports of that season, *OTP* invested almost \$80 million in the pursuit of Olympic medals.

The most important objective for the 2010 Games was victory in the form of the medal count, facilitated through a partnership between the winter National Sporting Organizations and the funding partners. A Task Force established by the Canadian Olympic Committee had determined how many medals in which sports Canadian athletes were expected to win. Sport performance became an equation ensured by a tiered funding plan for NSOs based on cost effective analysis of the sports in which Canadians were most likely to succeed, and a plan for implementation of the program.<sup>8</sup>

The final report identified a “hierarchy of funding based on each sport's contribution to Canadian culture, past performances at the three previous Olympic Games, potential for success at the 2010 Games, and sustainability of success past 2010. The resulting tiers are as follows: Flat Ice Sports (ice hockey, curling, long track speed skating, short track speed skating, and figure skating); Snow Sports (alpine skiing, freestyle skiing, snowboarding, and cross-country skiing) and Sports Requiring Specialized Facilities (bobsleigh, luge, skeleton, biathlon, ski jumping, and Nordic combined).”<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the *Own the Podium* Task Force estimated that an additional \$10.1 million per year in direct athlete funding was needed to secure 35 medals at the 2010 Games supported by \$11 million per year in recruitment and Top Secret research in sport technology. *Own the Podium* was, by far, the most extensive of the Olympic athlete-funding programs in Canadian history, dwarfing Game Plan '76 and Best Ever '88 by comparison. As was the case, however, with earlier programs, taxpayers supported most of this latest Olympic funding endeavor. In February of 2005, the Canadian government agreed to provide half of the required \$110 million needed to fund *Own the Podium*, the British Columbia provincial government contributed \$10 million to the program, and over seven other corporate partners were expected to share the remaining cost. Therefore, with public money contributing over half of the program costs, the over \$3 million spent towards supporting winter athletes through the federally-funded Athlete Assistance Program, and the \$13.5 million provided annually to the winter NSOs each year, Canada spent \$147.5 million in public money to secure medals, in addition to the more than \$620 million committed to hosting and the billions of dollars provided for tertiary infrastructure projects for the 2010 Games.<sup>10</sup>

Donnelly's critique of the decision to spend over \$6 billion plus an additional \$120 million of *Own the Podium* funding for the five years preceding the 2010 Games, which far exceeded the usual levels of pre-Olympic athlete funding in Canada, accurately depicted the outright purchase of medals: "its purpose is to prepare a select few of our high-performance athletes. The premise for this additional funding is that medals can be bought, but they cost a great deal of money."<sup>11</sup> With expectations for the medal count leaping from the 24 achieved in Turin, to 35 in Vancouver, this additional

funding meant that, after five years of *OTP* funding, the extra medals expected cost an extra \$92 million. Beyond the money, critics questioned both the national arrogance that was implied by the *Own the Podium* program title and the shift in performance pressure: “It is appropriate to support our athletes, to ensure that they know they are as well prepared as their major competitors and to engender a quiet confidence. It is not appropriate to put extra pressure on our athletes, or to potentially set ourselves up to fail by claiming that we are going to beat the world and win 35 medals.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Shifts in Criticism of Own the Podium**

The *Own the Podium* program, first introduced to Canadians in the early millennium, was named such with the intent of generating a new attitude of winning, historically atypical for Canada. The new approach created a major shift from, “wouldn’t it be nice to win a gold medal at an Olympics that we are hosting” to “we are going to invite the winter sports world to Vancouver, and we are going to Own the Podium.”<sup>13</sup> While the new program and the name attached to it seemed to exude an attitude of arrogance, some felt that it was merely a supportive approach that should be taken, while others perceived it as downright, unjustified, uncharacteristic, and arguably unnecessary:

Meek inherit the Olympics – the New York Times is right. We’d hate to actually win anything. Too embarrassing, eh? – “(Canada) is a vast country that in many ways is run like a small town, with small-town values, and it has a highly developed culture of modesty, if not a collective inferiority complex. The athletic record in general is a little underwhelming, and some Canadians think that is because their countrymen prefer that, considering a good effort just as valuable as a trunkload of trophies, maybe better.”<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, the initial claim that Team Canada would win 35 medals, when it had won only 24 in the Olympics prior, was viewed as a major, premature assertion: “As almost every serious athlete knows, pronouncing medals or victory before they actually occur flies in the face of Mental Training for Sports 101, and all too often proves to be a fatal mistake.”<sup>15</sup>

Setting expectations for the medal count that were significantly higher than those Canada had achieved at any other Games was controversial and raised the ire of some Canadians. Letters to the Editor, initially blamed precisely those officials responsible for *Own the Podium*, as expressed by reader Richard Green of Thornbury who wrote:

I fervently hope that I am not alone in deploring much of what surrounds these Vancouver Olympic Games. The incredible arrogance of our “Own the Podium” program, augmented by the boastful posturing in “It’s our mountain,” “it’s our game” style messages, as provided our country with a new and very unflattering image – that of unfettered braggadocio. Where did we lose our perspective on the meaning of sport? I certainly hope we return to quietly displaying our many talents and asses in a more Canadian way.<sup>16</sup>

Early ‘failures’ during the first events gave weight to this criticism. The *Toronto Star* opined that, “leaders of the COC and Own the Podium are now reaping the fruits of such a flawed and arrogant tact. If they were managing any other large business operation, they would be fired.”<sup>17</sup>

The silver lining of the first week of events, for the *OTP* officials came when Team Canada broke the curse of having never won a gold medal on Canadian soil. On day three, Montreal skier Alexandre Bilodeau won the moguls event, releasing some of the immense pressure that had built in anticipation of Canada’s performance. It also provided the first measure of legitimacy for the program and generated the intrigue and excitement that it was designed to foster for the upcoming events: “it’s too good to be



true. There's so many golds to come. Canada is so strong right now...the party's just starting for Canada."<sup>18</sup> As the Games progressed, this proved to be true, and, by the end of the Games, Canada had seemingly made great progress in defining its winter sport supremacy. In the reported opinions of athletes, the \$120 million *OTP* program, was worth every penny.<sup>19</sup> This, in conjunction with the home team advantage created an attitude of certainty and determination among athletes, "There is a different sense about this Canadian team, a confidence – never cockiness – that they are well prepared and ready to get the job done. For all the extra resources that have been poured into this effort through *Own the Podium*, its Canada's sixth man – and woman – that the athletes are looking at to help put them over the top."<sup>20</sup> Athletes and journalists were speaking a new language of Canadian sporting excellence.

*OTP* was framed in the newspapers to suggest that the program was the collective effort of the entire nation and that, as Canadians, the results were a reflection not only of federal government investment and the Canadian Olympic ingenuity but, more importantly of a new Canadian sporting nationalism:

Join in celebration of Canada's Games – Canadians across the country should be proud for their contributions – as taxpayers (1.23 billion for the Games came from federal coffers, about half of that for security alone), as athletes (the Canadian Olympic team includes representatives of eight of the 10 provinces), and as fans (300,000 people are expected to pour into Vancouver and Whistler for the Games, most of them from the rest of Canada) – we should not be embarrassed to cheer on our athletes, despite American scolding.<sup>21</sup>

Having Canadians collectively embrace and endorse *Own the Podium* in this way, as a reflection of the nation and its national strength was a victory for the network of sport administrators and government officials who had sanctioned this significant public investment in sport. With a security budget of \$900 million, the opening and closing

ceremonies alone with a price tag of \$40 million, and an athletes village that rose in cost from \$100 million to \$1.2 billion, and the additional tax dollars invested in the five years prior, officials were under scrutiny that could only be alleviated with Canadian success.

Additionally, Canadian Olympic officials argued that in view of the amount of tax dollars and public spending allocated to the athletic program, results would not only generate Canadian winter-sport nationalism, but would secure the *OTP* approach, ensuring its sustained success in the future. For this reason, the Games were approached cautiously and Roger Jackson, head of *OTP* was adamant about reassuring the Canadian public that these results would require hard work and patience:

Own the Podium head Roger Jackson says Canada will win most of its medals toward the end of the Winter Games. ‘As you watch the medal totals day by day, what you need to know is we don’t expect Canada to challenge for the lead until the last few days of the Games,’ Jackson said Tuesday on a conference call. “Almost half of our medals will come in the last five days of the 16 days of the Games.”<sup>22</sup>

Evidently, from the outset, officials hoped that Canadians would abandon the “roll-over” attitude in favour of a more assertive and optimistic approach. What was being promoted through *OTP* was a newly competitive Canadian nationalism, and *Toronto Star* played a significant role as its promotional arm:

Canada’s Medal Quest: Gold, and Lots of It. Organizers of the Games want to rewire the national mind-set and come away with not just a couple of golds but the most medals overall. They have dedicated roughly \$118 million to enhancing the performance of Canadian athletes, and have financed something called the Top Secret project, in which teams of scientists have been studying the various winter sports in hope of gaining a technological edge. The organization in charge of improving Canada’s medal performance has the un-Canadian sounding name Own the Podium, and its chief executive, Roger Jackson, said: “we’ve never been pressured before

to perform to a stated goal. Thirty medals or more is what we're hoping for this time. I think we can get those." Talk like that, so nakedly ambitious, makes some Canadians uneasy. The Canadian writer George Woodcock once said: "Canadians do not like heroes, and so they do not have them. They do not even have great men in the accepted sense of the word."<sup>23</sup>

However, this proved to require some flexibility on the part of both the officials, and other Canadians, as the Games progressed. While Canadians would have to adjust to the air of cockiness that had settled over the nation, officials had to adjust their commitment from most medals overall (initially projected at thirty or more), to the most gold medals overall, as the former became increasingly less likely.

In regards to adjustments in Canadian attitudes, the Games were approached with a degree of assurance and almost cockiness that had not existed before, yet slowly, alongside the lack of results, the Canadian Olympic Committee, Vancouver Organizing Committee, and other officials shifted their vision, claiming they hadn't really expected to "own" the podium. By this time, Canadians had already settled on the likelihood that Canadian athletes would not win the most medals of any country. "Does Canada own the Olympic podium? Of course it does! Canadians have paid more than \$500 million for it. It's just too bad that Canadian athletes are hardly ever on it" wrote Steve Zajac of Toronto.<sup>24</sup>

With this challenge towards the newly emergent ideal of Canadian nationalism centred on competition and winning, officials and newspapers searched for alternative reasons as to why the Vancouver Games were such a success:

Why this Olympics is already a winner – Ain't we got fun? Oh yes, yes we do. Not since Expo 67 or the Canada- Soviet Hockey Summit in 1972 has this country been in such a good mood: Engaged, celebratory, convivial and, in our fashion, sweetly patriotic. All that Own the Podium rhetoric, and the now modified downward

expectations, doesn't really amount to a hill of beans. In a gorgeous city, in an enviable country, and for anyone paying an iota of attention to what matters, these Games – only halfway through – have been an astounding success: Intensely competitive, dramatically decided in teensy fraction of scores and times, as inspirational and breathtaking as only sport can be, memorable.<sup>25</sup>

And though podium victories were not nearly as frequent as expected, some Canadians lauded the program and supported the athletes: “Shame on the *Star* for the depicting the Vancouver Winter Games as a disappointment. Canadian athletes are performing better than in the past. We are winning more gold medals. Own the Podium has had an effect,” wrote Don Hughes of Bancroft.<sup>26</sup> “Whether we “own the podium” or not...I’m proud to be Canadian regardless of how many medals we earn. I’m proud of the efforts of all of our team members... These Games couldn’t have been more Canadian – a few glitches, handled classily and with a little humour. A sea of red at every event,” wrote Martha Cruikshank of Niagara Falls.<sup>27</sup> It is this method of newspaper reporting that ultimately overshadows concerns and issues in society. Since it was unavoidable that the *Star* had to report on the failures of Canadian athletes and the weaknesses in the *OTP* campaign, these articles were strategically placed alongside editorials and letters from readers that highlighted the positive experiences of hosting the Games.

By week two of the Games, there was a second shift in Canadian attitudes, back toward the confidence that had existed prior to a fruitless first week. It was caused by a sudden upsurge of the medals, giving officials a new wave of success to ride. And though the expectations to win the most medals of any nation evidently weren’t going to be fulfilled, Team Canada was in a position to win the most gold medals of any nation. For reporters and *Own the Podium* officials, the shift in narrative was easy – *OTP* was a success. By the end of the Games, with a total of 14 gold medals, Canada topped the

medal table, depending on how one ranked the nations, of course. However, this was more than enough for *OTP* officials and Canadians, providing the opportunity for the *Star* to capitalize on this success and rationalize the new performance program:

Games give us golden glow – in the final analysis, we brought our Eh-Game. As a country, as a host, and most of all on the podium, where “O Canada” enjoyed Hit Parade deejay play, most-spun-anthem at the medal ceremonies...it may have cost \$1.76 billion, not including the mega sums for mega infrastructure projects, but the legacy is priceless, far beyond permanent new venues built for the purpose. With these Games, Canada came out of its shy and insecure shell. Suddenly, it was cooler than ever to be Canadian. It felt good to be us....Most of all, of course, it was about the athletes and all the wow moments of sport. Here’s to you, Vancouver. Here’s to us, Canada. As Neil Young sang it: “Long may you run.” Could have added, as an encore: “Heart of Gold.” And now, show’s over folks. So take off, eh.”<sup>28</sup>

This article demonstrates the shifting narrative of winter sport nationalism. Most importantly, it highlights how the nationalism generated and fostered through the 2010 Vancouver Games eased concerns of the \$6 billion Olympic price tag.

Arguably, one of the primary factors in generating the support of Canadians was winning the gold medal in men’s hockey. This raises the question of whether Canadians would endorse the multi-million dollar investment in *OTP* if Canada did not win the gold medal in men’s hockey. And if so, would the new winter sport nationalism be diminished as a result? According to the *Toronto Star*, “Team Canada: No pressure, but... Canadians expect hockey gold, and nothing less. Anything less than gold and you will be responsible for a tsunami of national mourning.”<sup>29</sup> On the last day of the Games, Canada’s men’s hockey team won the gold medal game, defeating the U.S. team 3-2. The question of whether or not the rest of the Games would have mattered without that medal can never be answered; the simple fact that it is posed should raise concerns about the ultimate value of *OTP* to Canadians, since a very small portion of the funding

is distributed to the men's hockey team. Can the program sustain Canadian winter sport nationalism in the event that the men's hockey team does not win a gold medal and, as the \$6 million in additional spending was not put towards hockey, could the medal have been won without increased funding, particularly as long as NHL professionals are permitted to compete?

### **Winter Sport Nationalism**

For more than twenty years, like other governments worldwide, the Canadian government has been using the Olympic Games to generate political support and endorsement. From the creation of spectacle to policy development, the late twentieth and early twenty-first century was an era of developing an identity for Canada based around winter sport supremacy. Having equipped the Canadian team with the facilities, policy goals, scientific research, and financial support up to this point, success at the Vancouver Games of 2010 served to punctuate this development for Olympic and Canadian officials as well as securing the role of winter sports in invoking Canada's national uniqueness. Without question, the 2010 Olympics generated national pride, signalled clearly by *Star* reader Clara Rubinstein Thornhill:

I have never been a fan of the Winter Olympics, even though my husband and my son love them. To be perfectly honest, I have never been a screaming cheerleader for Canada either. It is wonderful to see how athletes responded to more funding, to more sponsors. It is wonderful to see these young athletes competing not only for themselves, but also for Canada. And it is electrifying to see how the public's support is so heartfelt and complete.<sup>30</sup>

However, it is important to understand why and how this was possible. For Canada, as a nation of several million with diverse ethnicities, religions, cultures and races,

nationalism can be more difficult to achieve than in nations where identities are more singular. For this reason, spectacles such as the Olympics provide ideal opportunities for the creation of unique, and more importantly for Canada, more cohesive, identities. Historically, the concept of nationalism has been broken down into two forms, ethnic and civic, the former based on nature and bloodline while the latter is based on nurture and choice. For a multicultural nation such as Canada, it is necessary to classify the existence of most forms of nationalism as civic, meaning that citizens of the nation have made the conscious decision to pledge themselves to representations of that nation. Smith states that, “a genuine multiculturalism can only exist in the framework of a ‘plural’ nation, which celebrates the diversity and includes its different component cultures within the overarching political institutions and symbols of the nation state.”<sup>31</sup> This means that, while recognizing this diversity, members of the nation still pledge themselves to the core values and beliefs of that nation. This civic type of nationalism is very much the case in Canada.

For this reason, it is difficult to find a single cultural form with which members of the entire nation can identify. For example, flags, national anthems, and historical events struggle to generate nationalism and communal passion in a nation such as Canada, as opposed to other nations where the ethnic background is more uniform. Therefore, in Canada, it is the responsibility of the government to generate a form of nationalism with which a majority of the population can identify.

Hobsbawm discusses the role of the government in engaging in conscious and deliberate ideological engineering.<sup>32</sup> This is not to say that the winter sport nationalism existent in Canada was created from nothing; however, the government capitalized on

the opportunity to link nationalism to the already powerful cultural realm of sport. Since Canada is a northern nation, an ideal geographical location for winter sport training, and had historically experienced success in various winter sports, it was not so much a creation of winter sport nationalism as it was elevating already existing sentiments for Canadians. Interestingly, the goals for *OTP* in 2010 differed between Winter and Summer Olympic Games with the hope of finishing first overall and top three in gold medals for the winter count, and finishing top 12 overall and top eight in gold medals for the summer count, providing evidence of the acknowledgement of a long-lasting legacy of success in winter sports.

Additionally, the value placed on sport victories is highlighted in a panel discussion that followed the 2010 Vancouver Games:

Sport is a human construct that is designed to make us better – as people, as communities and as a nation. High performance is that part of sport that celebrates excellence – that helps us fulfill our human potential. It is in this respect that high performance sport is, in and of itself, a public good...As noted in the *Road to Excellence Business Plan* (2006) Canada is a sophisticated enough society to be able to participate on the world stage and excel. Doing so in sport reminds us of our ability to do well in other areas. It reminds us of who we are as a nation as we display our values and our character to the rest of the world.<sup>33</sup>

This was a strong message being sent to the public about the cause and effect relationship between international sport success and the betterment of that nation as a whole. The message of supporting athletes and sport in Canada was relayed to the public through the media throughout the Games.

At the commencement of the Games, then Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper encouraged Canadians to be supportive of not only Canadian athletes, but of the



*Own the Podium* program, for the sake of perceived pride that it would bring them, and in spite of what it may have cost to get to this point:

I know that thoughts of grandeur and boisterous displays of nationalism we tend to associate with others, and over the centuries things have been done around the world in the name of national pride or love of country that would have been better left undone, (but) there is nothing wrong, and there is much that is right, in celebrating together when our fellow citizens, perceiving some splendid star above us, willingly pay the cost and take the chance to stretch forth their hands to try to touch it for that one shining moment.<sup>34</sup>

Ultimately, this nationalism was realized. With the success that Team Canada experienced in the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, the funding and efforts of the government and the *Own the Podium* program created positive association from members of the nation. National sporting achievements are imbued with certain integrationist properties because they can contribute to a nation's perceived sense of 'greatness,' while simultaneously transcending differences among members of the nation.<sup>35</sup> This was the case for Canada, winning gold medals in 2010 generated a cohesiveness and unity in the nation by offering a common reference point around which people could identify. This in turn created a shared sense of belonging and community, further contributing to nationalism.

### **Athletic Excellence**

As discussed, the *OTP* program was framed around an ideal of athletic excellence as supremacy, making it an elitist merit-based support system. Those with the potential to win were given access to the best resources the country could provide, between training facilities, scientific and technological advancements, funding, and coaching, there were significant discrepancies in athlete support. What resulted from

this structure was the creation of a hegemony of excellence in Canada. Kidd defines this promotion of the Canadian variant of “excellence” as a “recent project of a fraction of the male upper middle class, enabled by the absence of any effective challenge to that class and gender’s leadership within the Olympic sports, the federal state’s response to a deep crisis of legitimacy and the simultaneous development of neoconservative idea.”<sup>36</sup> Through the meritocracy created by *OTP*, in most cases, those athletes with the potential to win medals are those who, financially, have had access to the best resources throughout their careers. Therefore, the hegemonic result of this sport system is a class-stabilizing effect as it encourages individuals to accept and even celebrate this meritocracy. Additionally, the philosophy of excellence reinforces state capitalism as it provides additional funding to those who have already had better opportunities, and blocks other athletes from further development.

In 2010, this is reflected in the funding for the both the Canadian ski jump team and the biathlon team. For example, the alpine team was receiving significant more support from *OTP* than the ski jump team, due to successful results in the past:

There’s been pitifully little money for nurturing a new generation of jumpers. Its share of Own the Podium funding was only \$410, 000 over the last five years, compared to \$10 million for alpine skiing. Without carding, the athletes essentially carry their own freight.” Jumper Brent Morrice commented, “We compete against countries that have 1.5-2 million annually invested.”<sup>37</sup>

In regards to biathlon, the road to Vancouver was full of obstacles. Before the Games, the *Toronto Star* reported:

When the necklace requirements of Own the Podium were established, the money and support flowed to a select crop of high performance athletes, with the expectation they repay the investment with a combined medal count second to none. But how does the other half live? What about those sports that have sent their best and brightest

here, with nothing but long-shot podium dreams and even less in their pockets? “It’s a little frustrating, not having a sponsor,” said Rosanna Crawford, one of the Olympic rookies on this young but promising team. “What about the up-and-comers in winter sports? We need to focus on some of the younger athletes for 2014. You can’t build a medal winner in two or four years in biathlon; it takes 10,” said Zina Kocher, a World Cup podium finisher in her second Olympics. It’s a chicken-and-egg thing, this business of results and funding. This team needs results, or even the strong threats of them, to pry loose corporate dollars.<sup>38</sup>

This leads to the most important concern posed by critics of the *Own the Podium* campaign. What is the likelihood of sustainability for a program that, as repeatedly mentioned, relies heavily on future funding from both public and private sectors? Additionally the program’s biggest flaw is focusing on in-the-moment medal potential athletes, which, while it produces a more experienced team, puts the future of Canadian sport into question. Without providing the resources to develop future generations, on the basis that they do not have medal potential, the nation may be jeopardizing the likelihood that Canadians will continue to produce podium performances in the long term.

Ultimately, due to the projected nationalism that was produced and reflected by the newspapers as a result of the gold medals won by Canada, such concerns receive vague, if any attention. Alongside the encouragement of the media towards the end of the Games, Canadians were influenced with continuous messages relaying that the *OTP* campaign was the best approach to high-performance sport for Canada. However, though nationalism was strengthened to a degree, another lingering question on the minds of Canadians and officials should be the effects of *OTP* beyond nationalism.

For example, one article reported that in 2010, Canada was facing a problem with childhood obesity and an increased incidence of diabetes, linked to inactive

lifestyles. Unfortunately, Ottawa's funding for excellence in sport amounts to just a couple of dollars per Canadian per year. However, as Canada's Olympic Ambassador in 2010, Nancy Raine stated:

The pride we get when our athletes compete and win against the best in the world is worth every cent of all the money that's been invested. I've often thought broadcasters should run a 900 number across the TV screen during Olympic medal ceremonies and ask people to send in donations. I'm sure people would be very supportive at that moment. Many of the Olympic sports have few financial rewards, and the costs to athletes and their families make it really difficult for the average family. We definitely need to find a way to make it more affordable, especially in the development years. When the Games are over and we ask, "Did we win?" We shouldn't measure it simply by the number of medals our athletes take home. We should ask, "Have we inspired participation in active and healthy lifestyles in people all across Canada? Did we change the way Canadians value excellence in sport? Are more kids interested in pursuing excellence? Did those medals ignite kids to get involved? If we do that, Canada will undoubtedly have won the Olympics."<sup>39</sup>

Evidently, there is major concern over Canada's consideration of the long term goal of *OTP*. However inspired and motivated future generations of Canadians are to participate in sport upon seeing their athletes win, it won't matter when the cost of such participation exceeds the financial resources of the families supporting those children. Peter Donnelly writes that, "Ideally, a value-added version of *OTP* would have had a capacity-building component, whereby Canadian winter sports took responsibility for the consequences of the inspiring performances of their athletes by nurturing the enthusiasm of new recruits. As it stands, we are unlikely to see any increases in sport participation as a result of *OTP* funding."<sup>40</sup> Has *OTP* then made some forms of sport inaccessible to the majority of the Canadian population? And does, as *OTP* might claim, investing in the top of the pyramid broaden the base?

However, did the Olympic officials in Canada leverage a home Games with the shame of never having won a gold medal at home? The twenty year period that led to the 2010 Vancouver Games progressively built a foundation for the Canadian federal government and Canadian Olympic officials to push their agenda of the importance in investment in elite sport. From 1988 to the present, high performance sport development in Canada has taken a new and success-centred approach, with contributing aspects and incredible expenditures ranging from facility development, to policy improvement, to science and technology research, and, unfortunately, as presented, the fulfilled winter-sport nationalistic ideal has curtailed the concerns that this raises.

### **Summary**

The theme of funding is particularly important in this chapter. As previously discussed, funding for the 2010 Winter Games was significantly beyond what the high performance sport system in Canada had received until this point. The combination of funds spent on facilities, science and technology research, training and coaching combined to create Canada's most complex and encompassing sport program ever. For Canada at these Games, early challenge criticized the arrogance of titling *Own the Podium* so aggressively, however, Canadian athletes did ultimately own the podium, winning the most gold medals ever in history and more than any other nation at the Games. This in turn proved beneficial in the development of Canadian winter sport nationalism as athletic performances punctuated the pride that had already existed. Additionally, alongside this winter sport nationalism emerged the ideology of excellence and the support of a program directed solely toward supporting athletes with the

potential to win medals. Therefore, the final theme of legacy for this chapter and of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games was a full meritocratic sport system, where winning became the dominant ideal in the eyes of the federal government, Olympic officials, and a significant portion of the media.

### **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup>“About OTP” last modified 2016. <http://www.ownthepodium.org/About-OTP>

<sup>2</sup>“Own the Podium.” last modified 2016

(<http://www.ownthepodium.org/OwnthePodium/media/ownthepodium/Documents/Own-The-Podium-Annual-Report-2014-2015.pdf> page 11

<sup>3</sup>David Zussman, Chantal Petitclerc, George Heller, Cathy Priestner, and Karen O’Neill. “The 2010 and Beyond Panel: Final Report and Recommendations” (December 2009), 28.

<sup>4</sup>“Funding” last modified 2014. <http://ownthepodium.org/Funding.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup>“Own the Podium” last modified 2016

<http://www.ownthepodium.org/OwnthePodium/media/ownthepodium/Documents/Own-The-Podium-Annual-Report-2014-2015.pdf> page 15

<sup>6</sup>Donna Spencer. “Canada’s Olympians get extra science and technology money from feds.” *The Canadian Press*, February 11, 2015. Accessed February 24 2017.

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1825656/canadas-olympians-get-extra-science-and-technology-money-from-feds/>

<sup>7</sup>“About OTP: Own the Podium Today” last modified 2014. <http://ownthepodium.org/About-OTP.aspx>

<sup>8</sup>Anthony G. Church. “Owning More Than the Podium: An Examination of the Policy Network Surrounding Canada’s Most Recent Olympic Athlete Funding Program.” *Proceedings: International Symposium for Olympic Research*, 382.

<sup>9</sup>Church. “Owning More Than the Podium” 383.

<sup>10</sup>Church. “Owning More Than the Podium” 383.

<sup>11</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 12, 2010, A25.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, A25.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, A25.

<sup>14</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 11, 2010, A3.

<sup>15</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 22, 2010, A14.

<sup>16</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 27, 2010, IN7, Letters.

<sup>17</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 22, 2010, A14.

<sup>18</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 15, 2010, A1.

<sup>19</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 11, 2010, S1.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, S1.

<sup>21</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 12, 2010, A24.

<sup>22</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 03, 2010, S6.

<sup>23</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 11, 2010, A3.

<sup>24</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 27, 2010, IN7, Letters.

<sup>25</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 21, 2010, A1.

<sup>26</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 22, 2010, A14, Editorials.

<sup>27</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 27, 2010, IN7, Letters.

<sup>28</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), March 01, 2010, A2.

<sup>29</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 23, 2010, A2.

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<sup>30</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 28, 2010, A16, Editorials.

<sup>31</sup>Smith. *Nationalism*, 42.

<sup>32</sup>Hobsbawm. *Nations and nationalism since 1780*, 92.

<sup>33</sup>Zussman, et.al. "The 2010 and Beyond Panel" (December 2009), 3.

<sup>34</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 12, 2010, A24.

<sup>35</sup>Joseph Maguire, Grant Jarvie, Louise Mansfield, and Joseph Bradley. *Sport worlds: A sociological perspective*. (Chicago: United States Human Kinetics) 2002.

<sup>36</sup>Kidd. "The Philosophy of Excellence," 385.

<sup>37</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 08, 2010, S9.

<sup>38</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 10, 2010, S5.

<sup>39</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 15, 2010, A4.

<sup>40</sup>*Toronto Star* (Toronto), February 12, 2010, A25.

## **CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION**

The twenty-two year period from the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics to the 2010 Vancouver Games was defined by major shifts in both policy and the funding of Canadian high performance sport. Canadian nationalism, expressed through sport became focused on winter sport supremacy, which developed specifically into a sport system with a narrow focus on winning winter Olympic medals. This research analyzed the development of the Canadian high performance sport system and Canadian sport policy, to examine how each winter Olympic Games have influenced and affected the Canadian nationalism that has been promoted in sport, through the lens of the media. Ultimately, the twenty-two year period examined was characterised by significant increases in public and private spending for the Olympic Games. The intent of this research was to demonstrate how media representations of Canadian nationalism related directly to the importance placed on high performance sport promoting the capitalist-based sport model in Canada.

In 1988, the Canadian government invested over one billion dollars into the creation of a winter sport legacy, coming only 12 years after the Games in Montreal, the debt from which had still not been paid off. Over \$366 million of this money was spent solely on the building of facilities for the Games, with the intent of creating a legacy of training facilities for future generations of Canadian athletes. Additionally, \$50 million was spent on the torch relay and fireworks shows, simply in the creation of an experience. The Games of 1988 in Calgary provided a foundation for a future characterized by winter sport nationalism. The carefully orchestrated spectacle and the



extravagant representation of the Games to the public through the media promoted feelings of nostalgia and the reintroduction of an historic Canadian winter sport nationalism. For this reason, though athletes showed poor performances at the 1988 Games, rarely were the Games labelled as a failure. On the contrary, the elaborate production of the Games served to garner support for increased funding in the future. The legacy of the 1988 Olympic spectacle then was a clear demonstration of the hegemonic function of sport by beginning to naturalize, and thus gain support for, investment in it. By hosting and presenting the event in such a grand way, the Canadian government set the necessary parameters for future Olympic Games funding.

The poor performances of Canadian athletes in 1988 led to an era of policy development throughout the 1990s aimed at structuring the Canadian sport system in a way that would foster future success for athletes. For winter sport nationalism to be further promoted, various policies were created from the 1992 Albertville Games to the 1998 Nagano Games. The reason for these policies was to develop cohesion among government departments, national sporting organizations, and high performance athletes, and aligning the needs and intentions of various sectors of the Canadian sport system. A significant component of this approach was the priority placed on athlete accountability. In regards to talent, the athletes had the potential for better performances, the funding was available and, following Calgary, facilities for optimal training were now also available. This suggests that the subsequent step to winter sport success was to develop policy in order to ensure that funds were being strategically invested and distributed. Through this decade, policies also began to identify the functional role of national unity and uniqueness in the pursuit of international sporting success. For this

reason, newspaper representations of the increasing success of athletes became more deeply saturated with messages of national identity. With the increased policy and organizational structure of the past ten years, the increasing identification of the influence of nationalism, and the legacy that preceded the 1990s, efforts in the new millennium became concentrated toward athletes with podium potential and in sports where Canadians were likely to win medals.

By the time of the Olympic quadrennial 2002-2006, Team Canada had been supported by the *Best Ever* funding program for the better part of 15 years; however, the development of sport policy in the 1990s and the increasing accountability placed on athletes to win medals set the stage for a new program. *Own the Podium*, which justified increased investment from both Canadian government and the private sectors, aimed at guiding Canadian athletes to higher achievements. During the early stages of the program, it is important to highlight the involvement of major key players, identified earlier, such as COA Chief Executive Officer Jim Thompson, COA official Mark Lowry, *Own the Podium* CEO Roger Jackson, and program pioneers Cathy Priestner-Allinger and Todd Allinger, who were central in pushing this shift toward a winning-oriented high performance sport funding program. The winning narrative, promoted through the Canadian media, linked Canadian national identity directly to sporting victories, thus legitimizing government spending and the propagation of a new high performance program ideal. With increased funds, the new program expanded to include research and technology components that would work to provide scientific advantages to Canadian athletes. In addition, funding was distributed based solely on an athlete's potential to win medals. The message relayed through the media was that a policy that

directed funding toward early identification of athletes with the ability to win medals at the Olympics, coupled with advanced research, was the ideal approach to ensuring success and therefore strengthening Canadian nationalism.

Ultimately, the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games served as a testament to the new *Own the Podium* program as athletes won more medals than ever to date and the most gold medals of any participating nation. 2010 also punctuated the development of winter sport nationalism that had been reinvented in Calgary 1988, as Canadians were becoming increasingly more dominant on the podium. The success garnered further support for investment in high performance sport and a narrative rationalizing such investment, for the promotion of not only national unity, but of Canada as a nation. In a twenty-two year period, the Canadian government had finely structured Canadian sport in such a way that the media was able to shed positive light, through a national unity lens, on what had become a distinctly monetized sport system.

### **Emergent Themes**

As mentioned, throughout this research, there were four themes that emerged that lend support to the characterization of this twenty-two year period as a time when Canadian winter sport nationalism developed and strengthened: *Legacy, Changes and Developments in Canadian Sport; Funding, Support and Structure; Expressions of Canadian Nationalism, Pride and Identity*; and finally, *Challenges Facing Canada at the Olympics*. Though some in a more prominent sense than others, each theme has contributed to the understanding that this period was paramount for Canadian sport and identity.

*Legacy, Changes, and Developments in Canadian Sport*

In the first theme, *Legacy, Changes and Developments in Canadian Sport*, the contribution of sport changes and legacy to Canadian identity was that each era served to create a stronger link between Canadians, athletes and fans alike, and winter sport. As this theme emerged throughout this research, it was evident that distinct shifts in Canadian high-performance sport occurred in each era in the twenty-two year period analyzed. In 1988, the legacy of the Calgary Games came in the form of the facilities that were built to provide training grounds for future Canadian athletes. It was apparent in generations following that athletes attributed medal victories to having these facilities available to them. By the 1990s, developments in sport policy and shift towards a priority on excellence left a legacy of accountability, cohesion, inclusion, and structure that shaped the future of high performance sport funding. For this reason, the legacy of the early millennium led to the introduction of a new sport funding program and the implementation of science and technology research to high performance sport investment, which would provide athletes with additional resources to improve athletic excellence. Finally, the legacy of the Vancouver 2010, one which still exists today was the full development and administration of the *Own the Podium* Olympic sport funding program. The development of this new program has resulted in a meritocratic sport system whereby athletes that receive support from it are those who are identified to have the potential to win medals at the Olympics. Ultimately, this theme serves as evidence that each era served a purpose in creating a more central role for winter sport in Canadian identity.

### *Funding, Support and Structure*

In regards to the theme of *Funding, Support and Structure*, without the financial, organizational, and structural resources provided by the public and private sectors over the course of this research, the ability to create and promote the developments of the sport system would not have been feasible. With each quadrennial, the Canadian Olympic team received increasingly higher levels of investment. In 1988, these funds were directed toward the orchestration of spectacle of hosting the Olympic Games and building the necessary structures to successfully do so. In the following decade, funding was again increased, but under stricter guidelines whereby policies were enacted to ensure that funds were being strategically distributed. The introduction of these policies ensured that athletes and organizations being funded were following criteria standards set by government and Olympic officials, some of which included; setting program objectives, improving access and opportunity for underserved groups, having an athlete-centred focus, bilingual policies and anti-doping policies. The initial introduction of *Own the Podium* occurred in the early 2000s, when sport funding was increased to include science and technology research. However, this funding program was not fully implemented until 2010 at the Vancouver Olympic Games where funding reached an all-time high and combined to include money invested into facilities, science and technology research, training, and coaching endeavors. It was in 2010 that Canadian athletes received the highest financial and resource support that the federal government had ever provided to Olympic athletes. This theme demonstrates how the development

of Canadian winter sport nationalism was made possible through the organization of a stronger and more aligned Canadian sport system.

*Expressions of Canadian Nationalism, Pride and Identity*

For *Expressions of Canadian Nationalism, Pride and Identity* this research has argued that over the twenty-two year period analyzed here, there has been a gradual development of winter sport nationalism in Canada. As with the other themes, each era has had an impact on generating and strengthening Canadian winter sport nationalism. The 1988 Calgary Games laid the foundation for the creation of this nationalism. In 1988, the strategic manipulation of spectacle linked feelings of Canadian identity to winter sport both past and present. Through the use of historical representations of “Canadianism,” these Games generated feelings of nostalgia and pride in sporting spaces. In the 1990s, the introduction of new sport policies saturated Canadian representations of winter sport with messages of winning and excellence, therefore strengthening what had already begun to become a significant aspect of Canadian identity. With performances by Canadian athletes gradually improving through to the new millennium, the early 2000s showed the potential for winter sport success in Canada. Following this decade then, the only missing component for the solidification of winter sport nationalism in Canada was significant medal victories by athletes that would place Canada ahead of other nations in regards to success in winter sports. In 2010, Canadian athletes won 26 total medals and a record 14 gold medals, the most of any nation. For the media, this was the ultimate realization of winter sport supremacy and was represented as such in newspaper articles, as they were officially in arm of the

*Own the Podium* program. The importance of this theme is more apparent than the others and its development over this period came from both the gradual realization that Canadian athletes had increasingly higher potential to win medals and the dominance of Canadian athletes in the 2010 Vancouver Games.

### *Challenges Facing Canada at the Olympics*

For the fourth and final theme, *Challenges Facing Canada at the Olympics*, the importance is to understand that the creation of the winter sport nationalism ideal was not met without challenges and criticisms. It is necessary to understand how these issues were controlled and treated by the federal government, Games officials, and the media, so as not to threaten this nationalism. Each quadrennial brought concerns and issues that would have to be addressed in preparation or throughout the Games. In the early Games of 1988, the threat was not so much to the winter sport nationalism specifically, but instead to the Canadian image that was being reflected as hosts of the Games. Between the Lubicon land rights concerns and the ticket scandals that threatened the early stages of the Games, the media worked to emphasize the values, importance, and positive effects of hosting Olympic Games, while simultaneously minimizing attention on these issues. The challenge proved manageable as any concerns that arose early on were quickly forgotten among the hype that came with the Games. Similarly, in the 1990s, the uncertainty of the role of French athletes on Canada's Olympic Team generated significant media attention and brought to the forefront the importance of creating an inclusive environment in Canada's high performance sport system. Transversely, the government, through policy changes, made some steps toward amending this issue with

the enactment of the *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework* which made suggestions toward equal opportunity for French and English athletes. In chapter four, challenges faced at the Olympics Games were, as represented in the media, brought on by Canadian athletes themselves, with their lack of significant results. Though athletes had gradually improved over time, the threat of hosting an Olympic Games and not winning a gold medal for the third time was realized in this era, as Vancouver won the bid for the 2010 Winter Games. As a result, this created favourable circumstances for the federal government and Olympic officials to introduce a new funding program, *Own the Podium*, leading directly to challenges presented in chapter five. The title of the new *Own the Podium* campaign was criticized for being both arrogant and premature in the anticipation that Canadian athletes would actually “own the podium” at these Games, particularly since they hadn’t quite done so in that past. From the outset, it seemed as though critics had a strong argument for their disdain for the program name. However, by week two of the 2010 Games, Canadians were the most decorated gold medal athletes. For the duration of the Vancouver Games, the Canadian anthem played more than any other anthem had and what had initially begun as an anti-*Own the Podium* attitude became one of encouraged competitiveness and confidence. However, particularly important to note when considering the increasing success of the Canadian team is the increasing availability of gold medals at the Olympic Games. From 1988 to 2010, the number of events at the Winter Games rose from 46 to 86, respectively providing almost twice the number of opportunities for Canadian athletes to place on the podium:



**Table Five: Gold Medals Available at each Winter Olympic Games**

<b><u>Games</u></b>	<b>Number of Events and Gold Medals Available</b>
<i>Calgary</i>	46
<i>Albertville</i>	57
<i>Lillehammer</i>	61
<i>Nagano</i>	68
<i>Salt Lake City</i>	78
<i>Turin</i>	84
<i>Vancouver</i>	86

**Implications**

In order to understand the importance and relevance of this research, it is necessary to first understand the value of nationalism to those in power. When analyzing the classification of nationalism in Canada, as discussed, modern civic nationalism is an ideal way to characterize this sentiment, as its role is both politically and socially constructed, rather than being a natural phenomenon that arose as a result of existent ethnic values. As Canada is a multicultural population, the creation of national identity is reliant on the creation of national institutions by the state. Hegemonic relations reveal how the state in Canada has constructed nationalism for Canadians, through institutions such as sport, and the value of such constructions. In this way, sport shaped society in ways that articulated the interests of those in positions of power.

Nationalism, as an ideology has been defined as the “attainment and maintenance of identity, autonomy and unity on behalf of a population.”<sup>1</sup> Oftentimes, the use of a national sport team can be a viable way of doing so, as following a national team can underline a sense of identity. Throughout the latter part of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, the winter sport nationalism created in Canada

was a strong means of promoting this solidarity and identity among Canadians. Through the promotion of successful winter athletes, the state coordinated and unified individuals around the common belief in Canadian winter sport supremacy, and the value of this to Canadian identity. Therefore, the role of high performance sport in promoting and constructing national identity is specifically relevant. Sport offers an important contribution to this idea of solidarity and belonging because it creates an environment of emotionally-charged interaction, and this was particularly evident in the Games when Canada hosted, in 1988 and 2010.

This research has concluded that the result of the twenty-two year period between the Calgary and Vancouver Games was the development of Canadian nationalism centred around success in winter sport. The support for this argument is that, as summarized, each quadrennial served a purpose in creating and supporting this ideal. From the building of facilities and a winter sport legacy in 1988, to policy development, and finally to the introduction of science and technology research, sport funding was strategically allocated to prepare Canadian winter athletes in every aspect of training and development, to garner the eventual success that came in 2010.

Ultimately, the most crucial component of the development of this nationalism came at the level of civil society through the media. The importance of success in winter sport would only go as far as the perceived importance that society placed on these victories, making media representations of winter sport success increasingly important. Throughout this research, there were vast amounts of evidence of nation building, unity, and nationalism being perpetuated through media stories about the Olympics. For example, while victory and podium performances shed light on the value of high

performance sport, there were many instances, particularly in the early years, of the media's ability to positively reflect on poor performances as well, and to make an argument for continued support and increased funding for athletes. It was through the media that the promotion of Canadian icons and symbols were created and that messages about the meaning of being "Canadian" were disseminated.

In addition, political leaders have historically used the "invention of traditions," as discussed by Benedict Anderson and mentioned in Chapter one, to, in Foster and Hyatt's words, "build, create, and maintain loyalty within the citizenry."<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the purpose served by the media was to strengthen the bond between the Canadian Team and Canadian citizens. One method of creating invented traditions is through their link with a historic past, evident in Canada through the period covered in this research. The state has made the necessary historic association between past and present Canadian sport history, recreating and capturing specific values associated, in this case, with winter sport success.

Furthermore, the power of the statements and symbols represented in the media rests in their ability to become naturalized as common sense. This can help to explain how, in Canada, the state has developed nationalism over such an extended period of time that the belief in its value and the centrality of winter sports to its existence have become a part of Canadian common sense thinking. Ultimately, this makes this ideal difficult to challenge and, as a result, the government in Canada continued to invest significant amounts of public and private funds on high performance sport with minimal objection. Congruently, these conditions created by the high-performance sport system and the media representation of it created a power dynamic that allowed the state to

make choices on when and where public funding would be distributed, also without challenge. Since the government legitimates and institutionalizes sport, the control over sport stays in the hands of those already privileged, while limiting resources for those without influence.<sup>3</sup> Since 1988, billions of private, but more importantly public taxpaying dollars have been invested into supporting the Canadian Olympic Team, including funds spent on the building and maintaining of facilities, science and technology research, coaching and training programs, and significant city infrastructure to support the hosting of the Olympic Games. To continue this point, not only are there members of the working class suffering on an economic scale, but the argument has been made that a focus on high performance sport has diverted attention and funding from grassroots and sport for development. These are the sport and activity programs that service the working class.

As reviewed earlier, Canada's 1961 *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* (Bill C-131) was the earliest foundation of sport policy discussion in Canada. The Act was Canada's first acknowledgement of the importance of sport and recreation in public policy. However, the Act at the time was created to focus mainly on hockey and international sport performances in Canada, rather than on the general health and fitness of the population.<sup>4</sup> The reason for this is that:

federal government involvement in mass sport and recreation was always considered to be problematic in two ways: first, mass sport, recreation and health/fitness were considered to be matters of provincial jurisdiction; and second, there was little political gain from promoting mass sport and recreation participation.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, the former part of this argument demonstrates the ways in which the federal government has avoided having to regulate mass sport participation for lower

classes, while the latter is, quite frankly, from a financial standpoint for the federal government, the blatant truth.

This further demonstrates structures of inequality and unequal power distribution as the working class are lacking the opportunity, resources, programs, and commodities necessary to stay active, participate in sport, and most importantly stay healthy. In comparison, millions of dollars are being invested to a small group of select athletes whose talent has been recognized and pre-determined as having medal potential. Equally important to note is that, due to the failure of the federal government to provide sport opportunities to the rest of the population, any existing opportunity to participate in private sport schools, clinics, and academies are limited to those children with the financial means to do so. Therefore, in the future, we will likely see an increasingly smaller pool of medal potential athletes receive additional funding to that which they can already afford, and the talent and skills gap between those individuals and ones from lower classes become nearly impossible to overcome, particularly without the appropriate resources.

Interestingly, the justification given for the importance of investment in high performance sport over sport participation at the grassroots level is that the federal government is taking a top-down approach. This means that the expectation is that Canadian success at international sport events will influence future generations of Canadians to participate in sport. However, a 2010 study conducted by Donnelly demonstrates that the opposite is actually true. The data shows that from the 1992 Summer Olympics to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, as Canadian athletes began

increasingly winning more medals, participation rates showed the inverse results with a 20% decrease in participation.<sup>6</sup>

The ideology of excellence that exists in Canada is another characteristic of the winter sport nationalism that was developed at this time and further demonstrates that sport is, historically, created and controlled by the state which exercises control over events such as the Olympics and express their own ideals as common sense. This ideology in and of itself strongly reinforces state capitalism, because, though seemingly self-empowering and socially-validated, there are evidently strong inequalities within Canada's sport system. To revert back to the notion of common sense, this research also demonstrates how the structure of capitalist societies have become naturalized as the interests of those in power are continuously reinforced through ideological constructions, of which sport excellence is an example. In this research, the state and ruling class have clearly used sport success, its contribution to nationalism, and the value that society places on it to mobilize support for government and its choices. The value of nationalism, then is to service those in power.

### **Future Research**

Future research might examine how this brand of nationalism may have continued to flourish beyond 2010 and whether or not the *OTP* campaign has had continued success in further promoting Canadian winter sport nationalism. Additionally, future studies may consider an analysis of local sport programs that have developed over the past thirty years, to examine whether or not there has been an influx of winter versus summer sport participation. This may suggest that, although participation rates in sport

in general have declined in the past ten years, winter sports are a strong contributor and determinant of Canadian identity beyond the level of fan support.

Furthermore, at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Canadian athletes experienced less success than they had in Vancouver. It is difficult to interpret the reason for this as these have been the only Winter Games since, however, if prolonged research reveals a continued decline in Canadian athlete success, it supports the claim that investment in *OTP* over grassroots sport has ultimately weakened Canada's high-performance sport system.

As already mentioned, analysis of newspaper articles from across Canada was beyond the scope of this study, as was the incorporation of French newspaper articles. Future research then may find that analysis of newspapers from Quebec may offer further support for or an alternative viewpoint to the value and role of winter sports in promoting Canadian identity.

The 22-year period analyzed in this research demonstrates the gradual development and contribution of various components of the high performance sport system that led to the creation of Canadian winter sport nationalism. Ultimately, the *OTP* sport funding program that exists today to support high performance athletes serves as evidence of the success of the federal government in creating, promoting, and utilizing this nationalism. According to an official *OTP* report conducted following the Games, 83% of Canadians view the Games as a source of national pride.<sup>7</sup> Then Prime Minister Steven Harper stated, "mark my words, some day historians will look back at Canada's growing strength in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and they will say that it all began right

here, on the West Coast, with the best Winter Olympic Games the world has ever seen.”<sup>8</sup>

By creating a nationalistic sentiment surrounding the Olympic Games, the concerns raised here are curtailed by the perceived benefits of investment and participation in high performance sport. For fifty years, the federal government has involved sport policy on the public agenda and, as most Canadians recall, winter sport has stood at the forefront of collective memory, nostalgia, and experience. As a population, Canadians recognize and believe in the value of winter sport success as an inherent component to their national identity. Furthermore, if the legacy of success that Canadians have experienced in the past twenty continues, the winter sport supremacy ideal will become more difficult to challenge. This ultimately means that, as long as Canada remains a capitalist economy, underpinned by the ideology of excellence, nationalism will continue to serve its hegemonic purpose in diverting attention away from broad-based or popular cultural opportunities where funding can be invested, for the sake of high performance sport.

### **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup>Clarke and Jones. *The rights of nations*, 45.

<sup>2</sup>William M. Foster and Craig G. Hyatt. “Inventing Team Tradition: a Conceptual Model for the Strategic Development of Fan Nations.” *European Sport Management Quarterly*. (Routledge, 2008), 266.

<sup>3</sup>Kidd. “The Philosophy of Excellence: Olympic performances, class power and the Canadian State.” (2013), 383.

<sup>4</sup>Peter Donnelly. “Sport Participation” in *Sport Policy in Canada*, ed. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 179.

<sup>5</sup>Donnelly. “Sport Participation,” 179.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>7</sup>*Vancouver Olympic Games Official Report Volume 2*, 8.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.



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- 2014 to 2017 University of Western Ontario
  - Completed a PhD in the Faculty of Health Sciences (Kinesiology)
- 2011 to 2013 Brock University
  - Completed a Master of Arts Degree in the Faculty of Health Sciences (Kinesiology)
- 2007 to 2011 Brock University
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## AWARDS AND HONOURS

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- Granted \$13,180, per year, to aid in research while working toward the completion of my 2-year Master of Arts Degree
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- Research proposal accepted for presentation at the 2013 and 2014 North American Society for Sport History Conference
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- First Class Standing, Brock University: 2011
- 2009 Croatian National Home Scholarship Recipient for excellence in academics, participation in the local community, and active member in the Croatian Community
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#### Western University (2014-Present)

- Kinesiology 3360 – Exercise Biochemistry with Dr. Nolte (Winter 2014)
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- Anatcell 2221 – Functional Human Anatomy (Fall 2015-Winter 2017)

#### Brock University (2011-2013)

- PEKN 1P90 – Foundations of Human Anatomy and Physiology with Dr. Ditor (Fall 2011)
- PEKN 3P70 – Sociology of Sport I with Dr. Ritchie (Winter and Fall 2012)
- PEKN 3P93 – Philosophy of Physical Activity and Sport with Dr. Rosenberg (Fall 2012)
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- PEKN 4P60 – Sociology of the Modern Olympic Games with Dr. Ritchie (Winter 2013)

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Western University – Fall 2014

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Western University – with Dr. Kevin Wamsley (Winter 2015)

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- Hamilton Media Advisory Council – 2011-2013
  - North American Croatian Soccer Tournament – Hamilton, 2011
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